The Middlebury Campus

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COLLEGE TO CLOSE MIIS BY JUNE 2027

COURTESY PHOTO / MIIS

An aerial view of Monterey, Calif., where the Middlebury Institute of International Studies' programs will run for only two more academic years.

By MADELEINE KAPTEIN & MANDY BERGHELA
Editor in Chief & Managing Editor

The college will end all residential graduate programs and certain online degrees at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies (MIIS) by June 2027. In a community-wide email and video announcement, college President Ian Baucom said that the Board of Trustees decided on Wednesday, Aug. 27 to approve his recommendation that Middlebury phase its Monterey-based programs out within the next two years, citing severe under-enrollment and financial deficits.

This decision follows the college's announcement of its $14.1 million dollar deficit in April, $8.7 million of which is accounted for by the struggling Institute. The series of cost-saving measures listed in that budget update, which included reductions to the retirement benefits of faculty and staff and increases in the college's enrollment, sparked several forms of protest and calls to dissolve MIIS from Vermont faculty, staff and students. In May, faculty voted in overwhelming favor of a motion demanding its closure within three years.

Baucom's email shared that all currently enrolled students will be able to complete their degrees with full access to campus resources. Faculty and staff at MIIS will also be supported through a phased transition process, with staff receiving at least four months notice before their positions are eliminated.

"To be clear, this was a financial decision and not a reflection on the quality of our programs or our outstanding Monterey colleagues, whose work is far reaching and significant," Baucom wrote in the email.

The phase-out will close all on-site graduate degree programs in Monterey, as well as two online degree programs: International Education Management and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Its other online programs — Cybersecurity, Localization Project Management, and MPA in Sustainability, and Organizational Leadership — will remain in place.

Middlebury's James Martin Center for Nonproliferation

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MIDDLEBURY NAMED IN LAWSUIT ALLEGING ADMISSIONS CONSPIRACY BY ELITE COLLEGES

By COLE CHAUDHARI
Senior News Editor

On Aug. 8, Middlebury College was named as a defendant in a lawsuit filed in the U.S. District Court of Massachusetts accusing 32 elite colleges and universities of attempting to raise tuition costs through the early decision admissions pathway.

Middlebury sits on the list among Ivy League universities — Brown, Columbia, and Cornell — and peer liberal arts institutions, like Amherst, Bowdoin, and Wesleyan as defendants. Also named in the lawsuit are private research universities like Vanderbilt and Washington University.

The lawsuit, a class action complaint filed by four former or current students of some of the schools named on the list, names the first defendant as being the Consortium on Financing Higher

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TOM NEVINS/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The Emma Willard House, which houses Middlebury's admissions department.

BATTLE OF THE BATTELLS: INSIDE THE NEW DORM AND ITS "VINTAGE" PREDECESSOR

COLE CHAUDHARI/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The view of Original Battell from the fourth floor lounge of New Battell.

By NORAH KHAN
News Editor

Current first years are the first class to live in the newly constructed Battell Hall on the North end of Battell Beach. The building, which towers over the northern side of campus, houses approximately 300 new students — 41% of the class of 2029 — and 14 Resident Assistants (RAs). It's the largest first year dorm to date, complete with air conditioning, spacious lounges, flat screen televisions, new furniture, vast windows, kitchens on every floor and a ping-pong table.

Meanwhile, its predecessor and namesake, Battell, now fondly dubbed "O.G Battell" or "Vintage Battell" by its residents, continues to accommodate roughly 33% of the fall first year class. With an exterior covered in picturesque shrubbery, a reputation for chaos (and sometimes mold), and a loyal following of nostalgic alumni and upperclassmen, the building stands in stark contrast to its new neighbor. But its residents don't seem to mind.

Ella Metri '29 said that she was briefly disappointed when she opened her housing portal and learned she had been placed in the older building. But after spending the orientation period there, her feelings towards the building

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International students return to campus amidst uncertainty

By HUGO ZHANG
News Editor

This fall, 292 international students from 75 countries are enrolled at Middlebury and all were able to obtain their proper documentation to return, according to Smita Ruzicka, Vice President for Student Affairs. But the process was not without challenges.

As a result of the Trump administration's recent attacks on international students' right to study in the U.S., travel bans imposed on some countries, pauses placed on new visa interviews and the introduction of social media screening requirements for visa applicants, Middlebury students experienced delays and anxieties over the summer when forming their plans for this year. Last spring, an international student at the college had their Student Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) records revoked, ending their lawful status in the country.

Executive Director of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) Kathy Foley told The Campus that while nearly all visa delays were resolved in time, one student's late appointment meant they had to arrive on campus after they had planned. Concerns amongst the international community at the college about studying and eventually remaining and working in the U.S have grown.

The students that spoke with The Campus for this story did so under the condition of anonymity due to fear of being targeted by the federal government, but editors have confirmed their identities.

Some students had to apply for a new F-1 visa over the summer, as the U.S. only issues one-year visas to students of certain nationalities. Among the first to undergo the new social media screening, they reported difficulties with the procedure and concerns over their privacy.

"During my interview, one of the first questions they asked was for my social media handles and whether the account I wrote down was public," a student told The Campus. "Because my Instagram was private, they couldn't monitor it, so my visa application would be on hold until I went back and made it public."

In order to prevent having her application rejected, the student unfollowed some activist accounts, especially those that support Palestine in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict.

"It felt like such a violation of my privacy and my rights," she wrote. "But I needed my visa to be processed, so I really had no choice."

She also said that this year, fewer visa interview slots were available compared to previous years, adding that she "barely managed to get the last one of the month."

A student from Ukraine shared a similar story. After studying abroad last semester, they were required to renew their visa. When they went to schedule their interview in February, the earliest available appointment was in January 2026. After managing to secure a slot, their visa was placed on hold, which they suspect was due to the social media screening policy.

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Cross country teams win Silloway Vermont State Maple Syrup Challenge
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College to close MIIS by June 2027

COURTESY PHOTO/ ETHAN MURPHY

Members of the Middlebury community gathered in the spring to protest the then-plan to maintain Middlebury's ownership of MIIS.

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Studies (CNS) will continue operations under the Middlebury umbrella in Monterey and in its locations worldwide.

The college decided to merge with the Institute under the Ron Liebowitz administration in 2005. Founded in 1955 as a graduate school focused on foreign languages, international policy, translation studies and terrorism studies, it was placed on probation in 2003 for a pattern of operating deficits by its accrediting institution, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), and sought acquisition by a stronger institution to improve the quality of its programs. An 80% majority of voting faculty passed a motion opposing the acquisition in 2005, but Liebowitz, who left his presidency in 2015, settled on the purchase regardless. The merge became official in 2010.

Full-time enrollments at the Institute have steadily declined since 2009 and are currently under 440, approximately half of Middlebury's original target of 850. According to the faculty motion passed in May, "past losses and current deficits combine to more than $25 million per year lost to the College's operating budget."

At the meeting where faculty discussed and ultimately passed the motion, professors expressed similar sentiments to voting faculty just over 20 years ago on the Institute's inconsistencies with Middlebury's mission as a small liberal arts college.

"With this motion, we can send Ian Baucom a clear message that we expect him to focus on repairing the college's identity and restoring our sense of purpose," a faculty member said at the meeting where the motion passed in May. "We need to send him the same message that I will share with my friends at Monterey after this vote, that we must stop wasting big amounts of money and time on this attempt to be big, because it is time to start thinking big about being small."

But in the video message sent with the email announcing the decision to close MIIS, Baucom clarified that Middlebury remains a globally-focused institution.

"[This decision] does not reflect a retreat from our global mission," Baucom said. "Whatever our decision is on MIIS, we must and will continue to be a Middlebury for the world."

Several students, faculty and staff walked out of classes and their jobs, boycotted or temporarily walked out of the Commencement ceremony, and published op-eds in The Campus to exhibit their disapproval of the deficit-induced budget cuts and the financial burden of MIIS in the spring. The budget cuts themselves were not addressed in Thursday's announcement of the Institute's closure.

Baucom in the video expressed his revere for all members of the community at Monterey and his regrets over the difficulty of the choice.

"This was an immensely challenging decision, one I did not recommend lightly, and one the board did not endorse lightly," Baucom said.

Editor's Note: The original version of this article was published online on Aug. 28 with the headline "Middlebury to close MIIS by June 2027."

RESPECT OUR LABOR!
HOW TO BE A GOOD TRUSTEE:
1 DO YOUR JOB!
2 PAY ME WHAT YOU PROMISED WHEN I DO MINE!
OUR MOTTO: SCIENTIA ET VIRTUS KNOWLEDGE AND VIRTUE
DEFEND MIDDLEBURY
NO Compensation Cuts! NO LAYOFFS!

Who is buried under MIIS?

Battle of the Battells: Inside the new dorm and its "vintage" predecessor

COLE CHAUDHARI/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The lounges and common rooms in the new dorm are spacious, and many have large flat-screen televisions.

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completely changed.

"I love how cozy it is, I love the spirit, the energy, the people, the dorm as a whole is really great," Metri said. "I would choose this dorm over new Battell."

Ruby Ly '26, the head Residential Assistant (RA) of Original Battell, said her role in the old dorm is special to her.

"I had a great experience my freshman year, and some of my team members are seniors who have also had their fair share of Battell experiences," Ly said. "We wanted to create a culture that made students feel that it is a place with lots of culture and history, somewhere they want to be."

Original Battell underwent light renovations over the summer, with minor changes throughout the building to improve the living experience inside, according to Associate Dean for Student Life AJ Place. Facilities staff repainted the main lounge, bathroom and entrance doors, and replaced furniture and games in the main lounge and several smaller lounges. Some kitchens also received minor upgrades, including new refrigerators.

Place wrote to The Campus that the third floor of Original Battell, nicknamed "the monastery" for its former all-male occupancy, is currently vacant and will house incoming Febs in the spring, along with Allen Hall. After this year, it will be demolished and later replaced by a new art museum.

The first floor of the south section now houses the Care Management office and the office of Joe Russell, associate vice president and dean of students, who was previously located in Stewart Hall. Students have access to Russell's therapy dog, Obi-Wan.

Head RA of the new Battell Hall Sebastian Cruz '27, who lived in Original Battell as a first year, commented on the dynamic between the two buildings.

"I think because of the large differences between the two, some students may feel jealous of their peers who are living in the new one," he said. "We are trying to be very inviting and encouraging of people to use the space and invite their friends."

On a rainy Saturday afternoon, groups of first years — some residents of the new building and others visitors from Original Battell — competed in a game of ping pong on the first floor as others gathered around a table in a lounge on the third floor, enjoying the ramen noodles they'd prepared in the kitchen with a view of Battell Beach. The flat screen television in the room was turned off as the students ate and chatted.

"I like coming here [Battell Hall] a lot because I've made a lot of friends here and there are such nice facilities," Paul Marzella '29, an Original Battell resident, said. "Not to throw shade on [Original Battell's] facilities, but these are more modern."

"[New Battell] is gorgeous, it was very easy to adjust. My room is nicer than my room back home," Kai Arrowood '29, a Battell Hall resident, said.

Move-in day looked different across the two dorms. At Original Battell, orientation leaders helped quickly move belongings into rooms, with the loop in front of the building making for a smooth transition for students and families who came with loaded cars.

The process at Battell Hall fared differently.

"I had to wait in a line of cars for two hours, and the elevator broke, it was pretty chaotic," Arrowood said. "They had us drive on the road by the Chateau, park on the grass near Coffrin, and then walk up here."

Several Original Battell residents spoke to the sense of community that formed quickly in its storied halls.

"People actually have their doors open and talk to each other," Eliza Loewald '29 said.

"I had heard that this [dorm] was more social, has more character, and the people are better," Ava McCauley '29 said.

Other students echoed the sentiment, emphasizing how residents have been open to forming community and new friendships.

"In O.G. Battell, obviously there is more history there, but at the same time, a lot of people are just out and about and will say hi and smile at you," Original Battell resident Paul Marzella '29 said.

Original Battell resident George Hallowell '29 characterized the rivalry between the dorms as playful.

"It's become like a joking battle where they [Battell Hall residents] will tease us about what's working versus not in our dorm, and we'll push back by saying vibes are better," Hallowell said.

Editor's Note: Editor-in-Chief Madeleine Kaptein '25.5 contributed reporting to this article.

Middlebury named in lawsuit alleging admissions conspiracy by elite colleges

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Education, an organization of schools constituted by nearly every defendant institution.

The Consortium on Financing Higher Education is an "unincorporated, voluntary, institutionally-supported organization of highly selective, private liberal arts colleges and universities, all of which are committed to meeting the full demonstrated financial need of admitted students," according to their website.

The lawsuit alleges that the early decision option deployed by these institutions is an infringement on antitrust law, because it effectively prohibits schools from vying for student application and matriculation. It argues that when a student is admitted through early decision, their unofficial obligation to attend that school means the college is less incentivized to offer as much financial aid as they would to students who are potentially comparing several schools' financial aid packages when making their choice.

"Early Decision is enforced by mutual agreement between would-be competitors not to compete for students offered admission through Early Decision at other schools. A school has no legal, moral, academic, or self-interest-based reason not to compete for students offered admission at other schools through Early Decision, any more than it does to refrain from competing for students offered admission by other schools through the regular admissions process," the lawsuit states.

"The schools lose their incentive to compete on price for students admitted through Early Decision, driving up overall "top line" tuition levels and reducing both need-based and merit-based aid for Early Decision admittees. The result is that both Early Decision and non-Early Decision students pay higher prices than they would have paid absent the conspiracy at the center of the Early Decision scheme," the lawsuit continues.

In response to being named as a defendant in the lawsuit, the college administration issued a brief statement asserting the college's commitment to accessibility.

"We have received the complaint but are unable to discuss pending litigation. Middlebury has had a long commitment to meeting the full financial need of admitted undergraduate students and provides access through a variety of resources for academic, social and pre-professional opportunities. In addition to the $95 million in financial aid we expect to award in all our programs this year, Student Financial Services provides additional resources to some students, including a laptop, health insurance and class materials and/or books," the statement reads.

Middlebury practices a need-blind admissions principle and is committed to meeting 100% of need-based aid, with 46% of students receiving financial aid, according to the Student Financial Services website.

While the college and other institutions on the defendant list practice this need-blind promise, the lawsuit insists that such a commitment fails to mitigate the lack of agency the attractive early decision pathway forces upon an applicant or a group of applicants.

"[A]n Early Decision admit who tries to negotiate an increase to merit-based or need-based aid will have little bargaining power because of an absence of competing offers," the lawsuit states.

The majority of defendants have settled the lawsuit for an aggregate of $300 million, according to reporting from Forbes Magazine.

ROBERTO LINT SAGARENA APPOINTED NEW DEAN OF THE FACULTY

COURTESY PHOTO/ ROBERTO LINTO SAGRENA

Robert Lint Sagarena, who transitioned in to the Dean of the Faculty position after Jim Ralph stepped down in June.

By RACHELLE TALBERT
News Editor

On June 30, Jim Ralph stepped down from his position as Dean of the Faculty, passing the baton to Professor of American Studies Roberto Lint Sagarena. Ralph had agreed to the transition in the spring of 2023, having served in the academic administration since August 2008.

"I am looking forward to returning full-time to the ranks of the faculty and to having more time to spend with my family and on my scholarship. It has been a privilege to be able to work with so many people over the years to try to make Middlebury a better institution," Ralph wrote in an email to The Campus.

In the coming years, Lint Sagarena will be focused on comprehensive faculty support: Advocating for fair pay and wellbeing, helping departments function effectively and restoring academic communities in the wake of the pandemic's disruptions.

"At this point in the year, I'm especially focused on bringing new faculty into the fold, but faculty at all points in their career need strong collegial relationships of care and mentoring, relating is the foundation of everything we do," Lint Sagarena wrote.

Ralph and Lint Sagarena both emphasized the importance of working with people in their administrative philosophy, particularly from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives.

"Working directly with people has been at the heart of my time at Middlebury. Teaching here is incredibly rewarding—our students' curiosity and enthusiasm constantly amaze me, and building mentoring relationships has been the most meaningful part of my work," Lint Sagarena wrote.

In his time at Middlebury since 2008, Lint Sagarena has helped launch the Anderson Freeman Center (AFC) and First@Midd, an orientation program for first generation college students. He has also done research on religion, colonial history and cultural traditions.

Lint Sagarena took a winding path into academia. Having lost both of his parents before college, he dropped out of high school in 10th grade, ranking in the bottom 10% of his class.

"I was an avid reader who found my high school curriculum profoundly uninteresting. When I prepared to take the GED, my high school advisor told me that taking the exam meant I would never go to college," Lint Sagarena wrote. "I then spent eight years on and off taking night classes at a community college (still thinking I would never progress in higher ed beyond dabbling) until an academic advisor explained how to transfer to a four-year university. That conversation changed everything for me and both advisors really showed me how much one person can impact a student's future for better or worse."

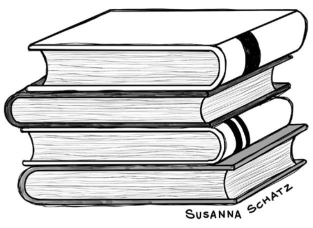
Growing up between Mexican and American cultures, Lint Sagarena's academic interest focused on how cultures with similar historical links appear so different. He pursued a BA in Art History and Philosophy at UC Santa Cruz, then an MA and PhD in Religions of the Americas at Princeton. Now, he lives with his wife and 12-year-old daughter in Shoreham, down the road from president emerita Laurie Patton.

In rapidly changing times for higher education, Lint Sagarena hopes to acknowledge the reality of Artificial Intelligence (AI), especially how it has already integrated into daily life.

"As a learning community, we need to recognize what AI does well while emphasizing the irreplaceable value of human thinking and creativity. Rather than being AI boosters or retreating into nostalgia, we should be clear-eyed about these tools. This means remaining conscious that AI might help us with tasks but human thought, the deep, sustained reasoning at the heart of liberal arts education, remains essential," Lint Sagarena wrote.

Through these changes, including threats to funding, Lint Sagarena hopes that a community-based approach will be most effective.

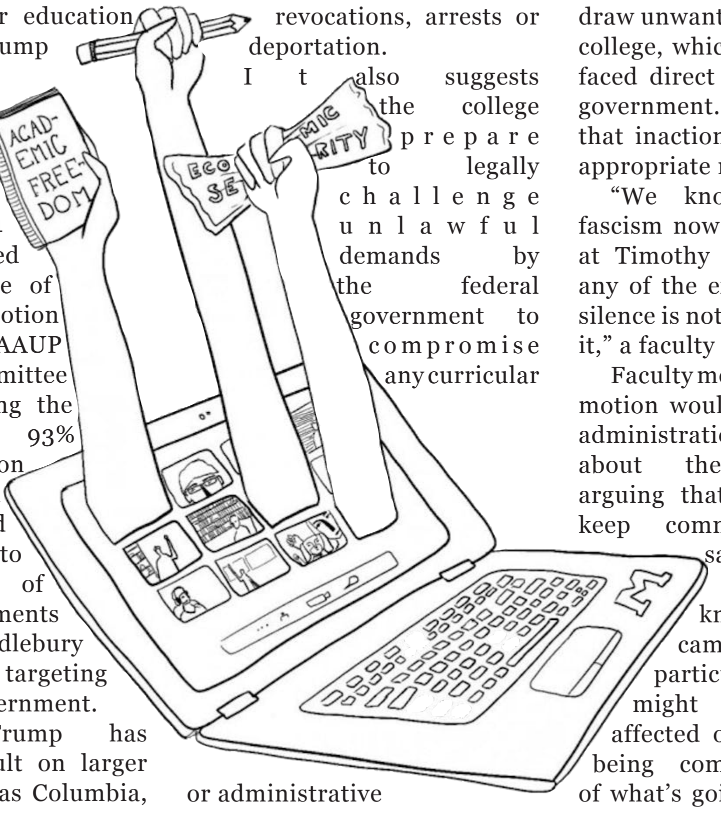
"AI's impact on learning, changes in student preparation, and shrinking research funding are just some of the current issues that require a team lift to engage," Lint Sagarena wrote. "Academic careers are demanding, and we need to work together as much as possible to address that reality."



SUSANNA SCHATZ

PRESIDENT BAUCOM, FACULTY PLEDGE COMMITMENT TO ACADEMIC FREEDOM

By MADELEINE KAPTEIN
Editor in Chief



In recent steps, both college President Ian Baucom and Middlebury faculty affirmed their commitment to maintaining academic freedom on campus in response to recent threats to the federal funding of higher education by the Trump administration.

Across two plenary faculty meetings in May, 114 professors debated and passed Sense of the Faculty Motion sponsored by the AAUP Executive Committee titled "On Meeting the Moment" with 93% support. The motion urges the Board of Trustees and administrators to make a number of specific commitments to defend Middlebury against potential targeting by the federal government.

So far, Trump has focused his assault on larger universities such as Columbia, Northwestern and Brown, but has affirmed plans to transform higher education in the U.S. by exerting influence over academic content and shrinking or eliminating some of its core aspects, such as Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) programs and opportunities for international students.

The motion demands the college commit to drawing from its endowment to protect academic freedom and freedom of expression if made necessary, using those funds to replace federal money that Trump could repeal through executive orders. Black Studies and Gender Studies are two areas the administration has called "woke" and stifling of free expression. Environmental Studies is also under threat as Trump continues to deny realities of climate change.

The motion recommends Middlebury ensure access to legal counsel for community members targeted by the U.S. government for free political speech or exercising freedom in their academic fields, as well as for members of the international community who may face arbitrary visa revocations, arrests or deportation.

It also suggests the college prepare to legally challenge unlawful demands by the federal government to compromise any curricular or administrative autonomy, a step Harvard took that led to their victory in the U.S. District Court last week.

Before the vote, which took place at a meeting over Zoom, professors spoke to their reasoning for supporting the motion. While the motion commends President Baucom for signing a letter condemning the Trump administration's recent demands of colleges and universities as "unprecedented government overreach and political interference," some argued that the college had not done enough thus far to support faculty. A professor involved in climate research shared their views on the shortcomings.

"I really feel that, as we've encountered these unprecedented and escalating threats to our work as teachers and researchers, that there has been a real absence of leadership, or even basic recognition from the Middlebury administration and in particular from the Office of Grants and Sponsored Programs," they said.

Some faculty members expressed concerns that passing this motion and allowing it to be public would draw unwanted attention to the college, which has not thus far faced direct scrutiny from the government. But others argued that inaction would not be an appropriate response.

"We know a lot about fascism now… And if you look at Timothy Snyder's work or any of the experts on fascism, silence is not how you approach it," a faculty member said.

Faculty members claimed the motion would help inform the administration going forward about their expectations, arguing that openness would keep community members safer.

"I think, with know your rights campaigns, everybody, particularly people that might not feel directly affected or directly at risk, being completely informed of what's going on, I think it's a step into safety," another professor said.

When President Baucom spoke directly to faculty at their first meeting of the school year at the Bread Loaf Campus on Sept. 5, he did not directly address the motion, but pointedly stated his commitment to academic freedom for Middlebury. Faculty members responded to his speech with a standing ovation.

"I will defend in every way I can, the vitality, urgency, and academic freedom of Black studies, gender studies, climate studies, and any field of academic inquiry coming under political pressure," Baucom said.

International students return to campus amidst uncertainty

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"The [U.S Consulate] officer explained that it's not a rejection per se, but a special status my application was being put in because there is some kind of additional check they need to do, and the officer himself couldn't do it on the spot," the student wrote in an email to The Campus.

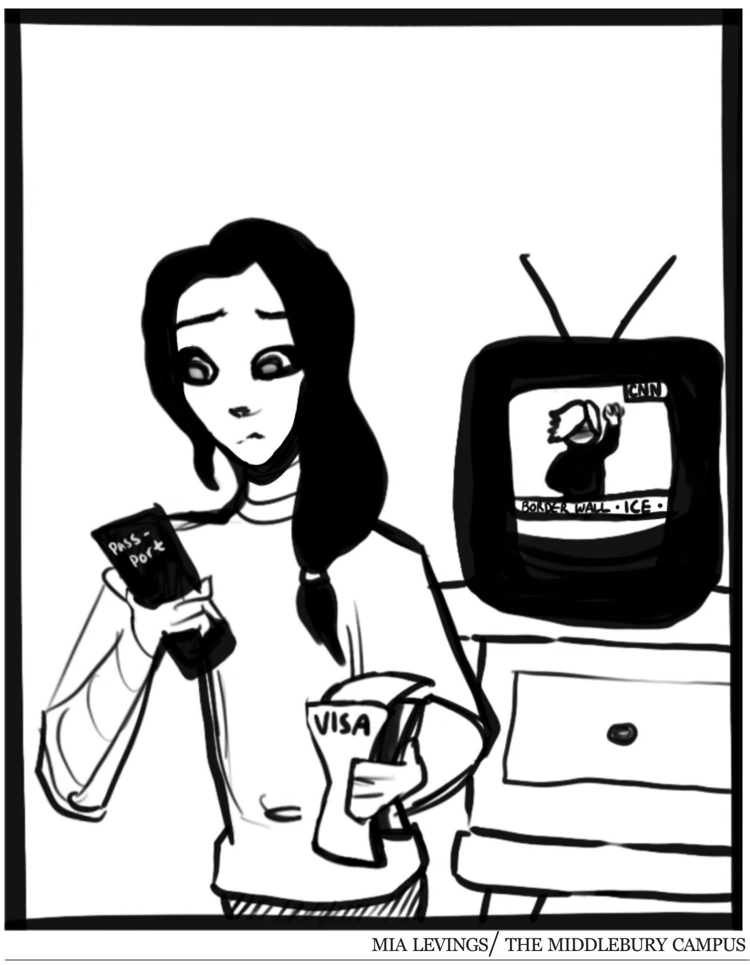
The student feared that the Trump administration's view of Ukraine, as well as their posts in support of Palestine, might cause the visa to be rejected. Fortunately, the visa was approved after a week.

"Watching that Zelensky visit in the White House, I imagined that Ukrainians could be faced with travel bans as well," the student wrote, referring to the Ukrainian president's meeting with President Trump and Vice President JD Vance in February that was cut short by a heated argument in which Vance accused Zelensky of of being ungrateful for U.S. support. "I'm somewhat scared about the new policies in the US, in particular because of how unpredictable they are. It's difficult to never know how things can evolve from here."

One student said that precarious visa appointments and policies caused him and other international students he knows to worry in the months leading up to the semester and adjust their plans accordingly.

"The spotlight around this issue has discouraged many of us to attempt making any international travel plans for the summer, breaks, etc. due to the uncertainty and risk," he wrote.

On Aug. 27, the Trump administration proposed a policy that would halt the open-ended 'duration of status' for foreign students, citing national security and visa abuse concerns. Under the new rule, international students would only be allowed to remain in the U.S. for the duration of the program they enroll in, with a cap of four years' time.



MIA LEVINGS/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

This rule is now under the official rule-making process, which involves a comment period before the final rule will be implemented. If finalized, the flexibility for international students to pursue their studies in the U.S. will be reduced. The ISSS team is currently assessing the potential impacts of this proposed rule on the international community at Middlebury, Foley noted.

As listed on the Approach to National Events page, Middlebury's administration has claimed commitment to monitoring federal policy changes and taking actions when appropriate. ISSS also closely reviews news and information that relates to immigration and issues that may affect Middlebury's international community, according to Foley.

"We're going to continue monitoring SEVIS records like we started doing in the spring to make sure there were no revocations," Ruzicka said to faculty at a meeting on the Bread Loaf Campus on Sept. 5.

TREE FROG MURAL UNVEILED IN DOWNTOWN MIDDLEBURY

By KATRINA SCHWARTZ
Senior Local Editor

As students moved back onto campus this past weekend, they might have noticed the vibrant tree frog outside of The Middlebury Shop at Forth N' Goal Sports that now watches over downtown Middlebury. This past spring and summer, the 15-foot-high mural was designed, created, and installed by local artist Matthew Haywood in collaboration with Middlebury Union High School art teacher Joseph Schine '03 and his students.

The mural was commissioned by the Better Middlebury Partnership (BMP).

"Middlebury is a very creative place, with a vibrant theater, art studio, museum and a world class college, and we want Middlebury to continue to be widely known as a town of arts and creativity," Kathryn Torres and Kelly Flynn, co-directors of the BMP, wrote in a joint email to The Campus. "We want to tap into our incredible local artists and creatives so that spirit is reflected both locally and beyond."

As well as existing as a unique and vibrant piece of art, the mural serves to direct its viewers towards the businesses down in Frog Hollow.

"The goal was wayfinding, but in an artistic way," Haywood said. "The town would see people sort of hesitant at the top of Mill Street, and wondering if they should go down there. [BMP] saw an opportunity to get people down and explore that area. Nobody really wanted to do it with just a sign that said shops, or something like that, so we did it in a more creative way."

Schine was also recruited by BMP to help bring the mural to life along with Haywood. He explained that the town's preservation requirements posed a challenge during the planning process. Since painting directly on brick was not permitted, the team had to find creative alternatives, such as using drilled panels instead.

According to Haywood, who also founded the design company The Image Farm, the distressed look of the arrow and Frog Hollow sign is intended to evoke a sense of history, blending the new with the old. He also explained that the frog is itself a hybrid, modeled after the red-eyed tree frog of Central America, while its coloration and markings are drawn from the gray tree frog native to the Middlebury area.

"It's a really subtle statement on how people from away can contribute to the community and become part of the fabric in a really seamless way," Haywood said.

The artwork is made from two sheets of aluminum composite with a recycled plastic core. Haywood explained that after he produced a sketch, the pieces of the mural were cut with the help of the Hannaford Career Center and their Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machine. Schine and his students then got to work painting the frog and the branch on which it rests.

"I describe myself as a public servant, who wants to get young people involved in projects that are outside of the school," Schine said.

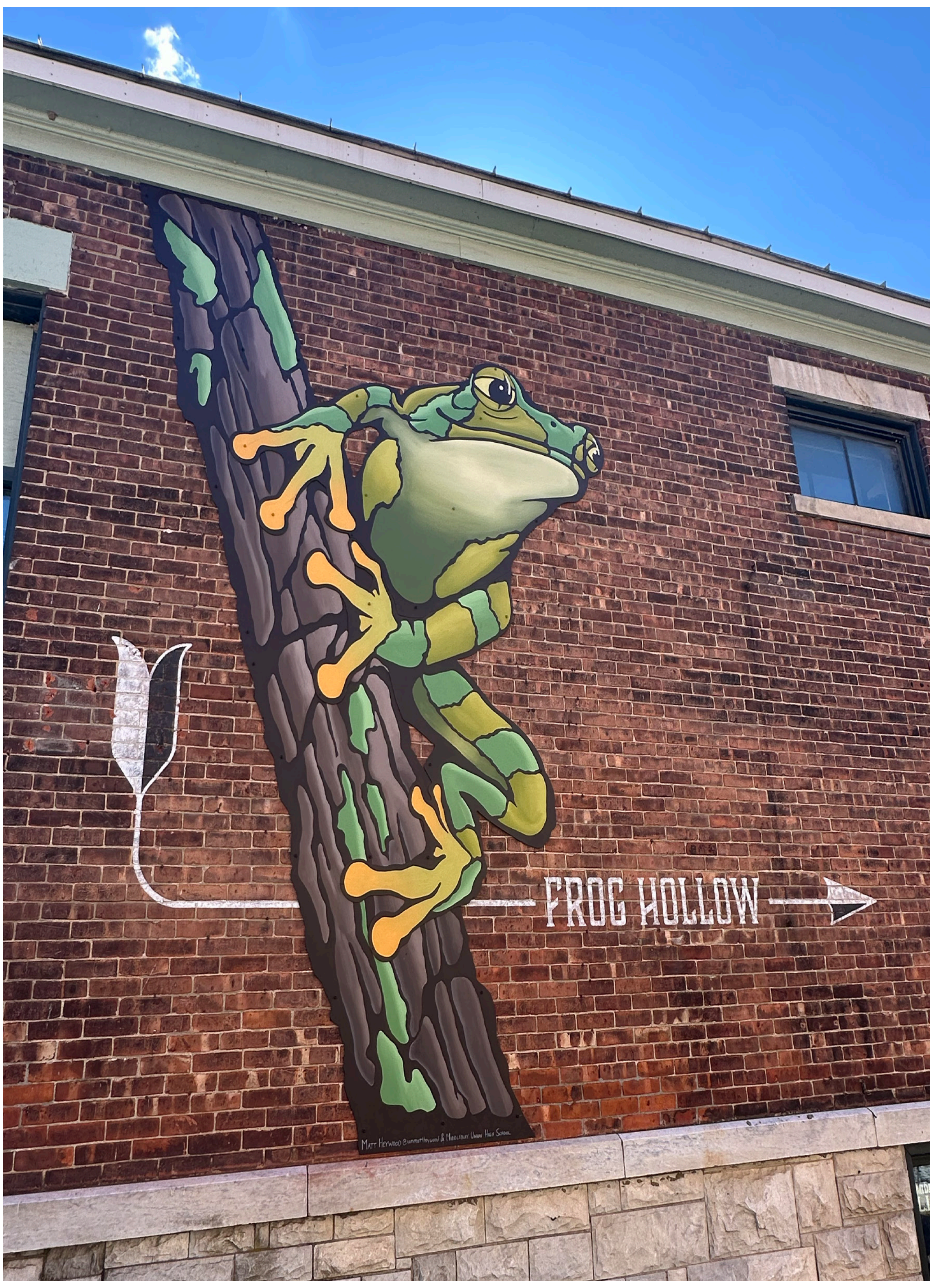
Since the mural was mainly painted on panels, students could work on it within the classroom.

"This is something that I love and would love to do more of…I would like to see more possibilities where students can plug into bigger projects," Schine said.

Prior to working on the mural, students practiced in class, creating their own frogs renderings. They also created mock-ups of the frog mural, and some of their color scheme ideas were transferred to the final version currently displayed on Mill Street.

The mural worked as a point of connection between various members of the Middlebury community. From the Hannaford Career Center to Middlebury Union High School students, several community members came together to create the frog mural. The Silver Maple Construction Company, a local business, volunteered their time and crew to aid with the mural's installation.

"We see it as the start of a series of murals we'd like to commission as a town. It's a fun and inviting way to bring the community together and serve as a talking point," Torres and Flynn wrote.



KATRINA SCHWARTZ / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
Tree frog mural in downtown Middlebury directs people to Frog Hollow.

Schine echoes this sentiment and believes that the presence of murals like this one can continue to build community connection beyond their creation.

"I hope to pose some questions, because I think there is a chance for our communities to have conversations about what to grow visually in the downtown, and what the downtown visual culture could be," Schine said.

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SEVERE SUMMER WEATHER IN MIDDLEBURY PROMPTS CLIMATE CONCERNS

By VIOLET WEXLER
Local Editor

This summer, Addison County faced extreme weather, including an intense thunderstorm in July and a drought in August. Both events caused damage throughout campus and in downtown Middlebury, raising concerns about the broader implications of climate change in the local area.

The first incident occurred on July 10, when an extreme thunderstorm struck Addison County. The storm significantly impacted vegetation on Middlebury's campus, prompting extensive recovery efforts from college staff.

"We lost about 10 or 12 trees, and we had to prune storm damage out of about another 25. It probably took our grounds department a good three weeks or so to get back to normal and clean ground and clean things up from this storm," Tim Parsons, head horticulturist at the college, said.

The storm was similarly disruptive to Middlebury students living in town over the summer.

"My roommate and I were driving home from the grocery store, and the storm came so suddenly that all the cars near the intersection had pulled aside and couldn't drive. We made it back to our house, but we could barely see through the storm," Brooke Allison '25.5 said.

The aftermath of the storm led to road closures, power outages, and damage to Middlebury Union High School. The Addison Independent reported that the school suffered damage to its roof, which will require a repair to a 4,000-square-foot section above the auditorium.

What was particularly unusual about the storm was not the overall damage, but its uneven distribution across campus. Areas around Davis Library were notably affected, while the north end of campus saw no impact.

Just weeks later, the county endured severe heat and drought. On Aug. 12, Director of Environmental Safety & Compliance Jesse Stratton sent out an email alerting students on campus about a heat advisory put out by the National Weather Service. This email also warned students about the Fire Danger Forecast, which was high at the time.

"Recently, a cigarette that was improperly discarded was identified as the primary ignition source for a small fire in a flower bed adjacent to McCullough Student Center," Stratton wrote.

Staff members worry that certain types of student activity increase danger during such dry periods.

"I think we are all very concerned about the fire pit that's out at the Knoll. You are supposed to register when you use that, but I think the town fire warden has completely shut that down for the immediate future," Parsons said.

Beyond immediate safety concerns, the severe weather this past summer raises a larger question: How will Vermont's climate change over the coming years? According to the Vermont State Website, the state has seen rising temperatures, increased precipitation and negative effects on biodiversity.

COURTESY PHOTO / TIM PARSONS

Middlebury staff remove storm damage on campus.

"The last 11-year period (2010-2020) was the warmest 11-year period on record. If emissions are not cut, historically unprecedented warming is projected to continue through this century," the Vermont State Website states.

With summers expected to continue trending warmer, the July thunderstorms and August drought serve as a reminder that Addison County is subject to broader climate trends. Staff on campus are taking steps to protect against these increasingly extreme conditions. An example is planting new trees that are more resilient to extreme weather and diversify the landscape.

"I'm trying to plant as many different species as I can because the more diverse our tree population is, the more resilient it becomes. I'm also starting to plant vtrees that do better down south. I'm planting more oaks on the grounds here now because in 50 to 75 years, our climate will need it, and trees just can't pick up and move," Parsons said.

HERO SUSHI & ASIAN GROCERY OPENS ON MACINTYRE LANE

By AGNES WANG
Local Editor

This past June, the family-owned Hero Sushi and Asian Grocery opened its doors at 21 Macintyre Lane beside Middlebury Discount Beverage, inviting students and locals to enjoy a cozy, welcoming space filled with fresh Asian food and distinctive snacks.

Open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m.-7 p.m., the shop's offerings span from fresh sushi and ready-to-go items like kimchi and dumplings, to snacks, beverages and hair-care products from across Asia, including countries like China, Korea, Thailand and Myanmar.

Owner Aung Oo prepares all the sushi and other freshly made dishes, while his niece and business assistant, Twal Tar Su, along with her cousins, curate the snack selection based on personal favorites, resulting in a wide variety that reflects their different tastes.

Oo has over 10 years of experience as a sushi chef, having worked in Albany, NY and most recently at Hannaford in Middlebury. However, according to Su, he has wanted to open his own sushi store for as long as she can remember.

"He would like to taste the best version of sushi at Middlebury," Su said.

In April, Oo took the first step toward opening the business by acquiring the space. Over the next two months, he secured a food license to prepare sushi and filled the store with a diverse selection of products.

The store has not launched any large-scale advertising and remains in its soft launch phase. Su explained that, with limited staff and little prior experience running a retail business, they are not yet prepared to manage an overwhelming volume of customers. For now, their outreach consists of posts on Facebook and Google Maps, with most business resulting from word of mouth.

Despite limited advertising, Hero Sushi & Grocery has consistently earned positive reviews on both Google and Facebook since opening, according to Su.

"Customers always make comments on our page, like the sushi is the best. And then they always tell their neighbors or friends about it," Su said.

To ensure top-quality food, Oo sources premium ingredients and continually works to refine his craft.

The store is also a draw for Middlebury students. Kendall Clayton '26 and Laila Almefty-Hernandez '26 first learned about it through friends and have since visited several times.

"I heard three people from different friend groups being like 'Did you hear there's a new Asian market in town'?'' Almefty-Hernandez said.

Similarly, Clayton, who had never shopped at an Asian grocery store before, was struck by the variety of unfamiliar products during her first visit. Since then, she has tried the sushi, kimchi, melon-flavored popsicle sticks and several drinks.

HERO
SUSHI &
ASIAN GROCERY
OPEN

AGNES WANG/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Hero Sushi & Grocery is located on 21 Macintyre Lane.

Almefty-Hernandez also praised the store's variety, purchasing a Thai iced tea and sushi on her visit. In the past, she had to travel to Burlington for Asian groceries. However, with this new store in town, Almefty-Hernandez believes she can save the hour-long trip.

"It was bigger than I thought, which is exciting. I don't often go past Royal Oak, just for convenience. So now I know there's a place out there that's worth it," Almefty-Hernandez said.

Beyond its products, the store places a strong emphasis on customer service. Alongside Su and her uncle Oo, Su's aunt and cousins frequently help in the shop. Her aunt manages the finances while everyone else pitches in with day-to-day tasks. Su shared that their family, originally from Myanmar, sometimes faces challenges communicating due to a language barrier. Regardless, as a family-owned business, they strive to build personal connections with customers and ensure each one leaves satisfied.

"They seemed family-run because the people there were really sweet when we walked in," Clayton said.

Following its successful soft launch, the store plans to hold a grand opening in the coming months.

What's Next? Invest in People. Not Projects.

Op-Ed

***Daniel Allen** is a member of the class of 2024.5.*

After nearly two decades of polemics, the Monterey campus is set to close in 2027.

As the books are settled, we must ask ourselves: What will Middlebury do with its new windfall of nearly nine million dollars a year?

I hope to convince you that students, staff, and professors ought not to be placated with vague promises of improvement, but demand specifics: New professorships, increased salaries for staff and professors, and the reimplementation of campus staples (such as the Commons and Midnight Ross). Failing to do so risks losing the money in opaque administrative initiatives that perpetuate themselves rather than re-strengthen our ability to educate.

We must act quickly. Incoming funds must be appropriated or risk being lost in the next fiscal year. As the next budget is drawn, those who scream the loudest and the earliest will have an advantage. It therefore implores us to know what to scream for.

One of the simple requests will be to reverse the decline in professorships and stagnant wages. Compared to other liberal arts colleges, Middlebury offers relatively low salaries (bottom 15th percentile). Lowering professor pay means positions are treated as career stepping stones, rather than a place for professors to set down roots and foster an academic community. Higher wages help retain our professors, underscore our own commitment to educational excellence, and attract new talent. Creating new professorships will also alleviate the stress placed on courses with high enrollment but low staffing – a common problem on campus that belies our 9:1 student-faculty ratio. This will be especially crucial as Middlebury moves to increase student enrollment. Using our funds in this manner will result in more personalized learning, smaller classes taught by better, more motivated professors, and more variety for students – the very core of our liberal arts experience.

An increase in wages for staff will also be vital in Middlebury's revival. The state of our dining halls, libraries, and dorms is a daily referendum on whether we have sufficient staff. We have found creative workarounds (such as employing more students), but ultimately, these are stopgap measures and not sustainable labor policies. The answer is straightforward: Offer more money. Quality of life on our campus will increase with better-maintained facilities, longer hours of operations for dining halls, sports facilities, and libraries. If you want a campus that runs, pay for the people who run it.

The steps outlined above would already greatly improve Middlebury's standing. But these funds can also be used to foster something less measurable, but even more important: campus community. Much of Middlebury's student experience ought to be underscored by a tightly knit community. Instead, we have gradually dismembered the very organizations that helped bind Middlebury together. Programs such as the Commons system were tossed due to their associated costs, and Midnight Ross has become a husk of its former self. Re-establishing these programs will incentivize closer professor-student relationships and help foster a livelier, more curious, more active campus.

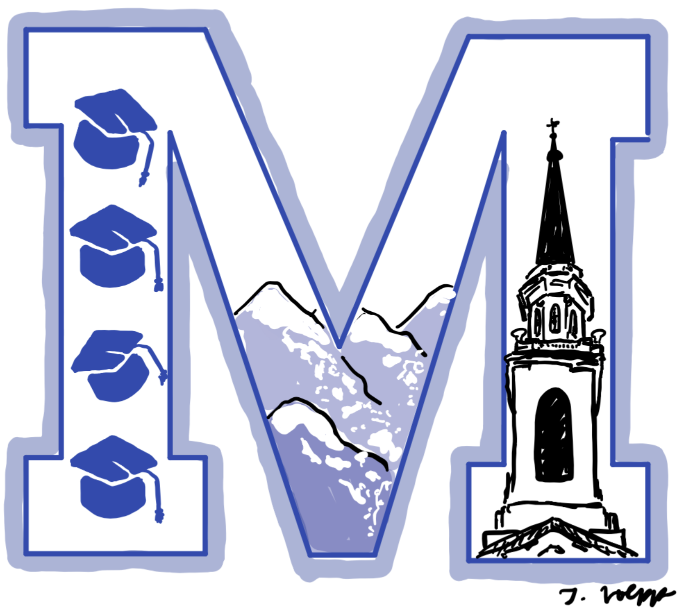
While Monterey caused financial strain, scrapping everything is a mistake. Programs associated with Monterey, like the Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS), provided both valuable learning experiences for undergrads, as well as raising the school's reputation in fields it would otherwise not contribute to. They are also, crucially, self-sustaining. With a CNS facility in Vermont already approved and slated for an on-campus location, integration becomes crucial. Using some of these funds for the integration of these programs into the broader undergraduate experience will help continue to broaden students' horizons and maintain Middlebury's status as an elite institution.

As old programs are shuttered, new ones are bound to appear. I plead not to let "new" become a substitute for "good". We do not need a larger Proctor (the lines are largely due to understaffing), or more museums, or more art initiatives. These programs, though noble in their intent, require further upkeep — which we already struggle with — and provide more 'things' but do not provide substance. Middlebury College lacks the latter, not the former. In short: Invest in people, not in projects.

There will be others who will try and use this money if you don't. For the last 20 years, the Middlebury administration has expanded as student life and professor opportunities have shrunk. In 2005, the size of the senior leadership team was about five, with a student population of approximately 2,400. Today, the senior leadership team has more than tripled (17 members as of April 2025). In comparison, the student population has grown by about 300 in 20 years (about 8%). One has clearly outpaced the other, even though the former serves the latter. Salaries within the administration outpace those of professors, having almost quadrupled for the president and doubled for upper administrators. Their growing numbers sit oddly out of place in the otherwise austere policies being written from Old Chapel. If the Middlebury community does not speak out quickly and decisively, it will be administrators who will enjoy the lion's share of future funds.

Unprecedented attacks on the nation's education system make the shuttering of any place of learning a tragic one. Monterey is a household name in Washington's policy circles and well respected for its translation programs that prepared diplomats and UN translators alike. I myself passed through the campus, and am better for it. But after 15 years of financial difficulties, something had to give. President Ian Baucom took a sad but necessary step.

How he decides to proceed will frame the legacy he has begun to build. Either closing Monterey was the first move in a slow but gradual decline of Middlebury College's influence, as financial mismanagement continues to eat away at student life, academics, and the college's reputation. Or, if these funds are used to bring back the programs and staff that made Middlebury unique, it will place it firmly in the ranks of those institutions that continue to make good on their promise to educate, challenge, and support their students through small classes, great teaching, and the tightly-knit intellectual community that defines a liberal arts education.



MIIS STUDENTS WERE MISLED

Op-Ed

***Megan Szostak** is a first year student at MIIS.*

I am a first year at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey pursuing a degree in Environmental Policy and Management (EPM). I may not be a student here for much longer.

When the news of the Institute's closure in June of 2027 — the month of my supposed graduation from the EPM program — was announced, students, faculty, and staff alike seemed blindsided. After completing my undergraduate degree in 2022 at Tufts University, I was eager to further my education at MIIS. The Institute was the best option available to me to continue my career in coastal studies and policy, and was recommended to me by several of my mentors at Tufts. I arrived in sunny Monterey just a few days before Welcome Week — new student orientation — began, feeling lucky to have a year-long lease in hand in such a competitive market that rivaled my experiences of finding housing in the Boston metro area.

While we were aware of the rising tensions between Middlebury's Vermont and Monterey campuses, as well as the significant financial strain MIIS places on the College, the consensus seems to be that we did not expect a complete closure would be announced just two years out. Several of my professors expressed surprise at the decision in messages sent to students on Thursday.

According to MIIS staff I have spoken to, layoffs began by Friday — just one day after the announcement. In the email sent to the MIIS community, President Ian Baucom wrote that "[Middlebury is] committed to supporting our currently enrolled students, including those starting this fall, so that they may successfully complete their degrees by June 2027, with a full array of on-campus resources." This first round of layoffs lets me know that a "full array of on-campus resources" will certainly not be available to us. Additionally, as professors are not tenured here at MIIS, it is impossible to know whether the faculty I expected to work with will even remain here at MIIS for the duration of my two-year program.

Like me, many of my classmates also moved here from far away. Others are here on student visas. We feel captive. Without an active MIIS enrollment, many students will not be able to stay here in Monterey or in the U.S. For those of us who do have the ability to remain in Monterey, withdrawing from the program would leave us seeking full-time jobs in this small metropolitan area in this time of national economic turmoil. And one of the local county's major employers (MIIS) is shutting down. This will only further strain our local economy and make it more difficult for students who choose to withdraw from MIIS to find employment.

The decision to inform incoming students after we had already arrived in Monterey, many of us with year-long residential leases, feels exploitative; if I had known earlier, I would not have enrolled nor come across the continent to Monterey. But now I am here, bound by a lease, and faced with a choice: maintain my enrollment but with markedly fewer resources available to me during my two years while still paying the same amount for my graduate degree, or take a leap of faith into applying for full-time work in the area.

For many students, myself included, the scholarships we were awarded to offset our tuition offer security that cannot be guaranteed if we choose to withdraw. MIIS knows this. They know that it is likely in our best interest to remain enrolled, which ensures more tuition dollars for them. And we have until Sept. 15, just over two weeks from the announcement date, to decide. While I certainly understand that decisions are multifaceted and take time to finalize, Middlebury should have either given us more than two years notice (meaning, alerting us to the closure of MIIS but with a final graduation date of sometime beyond June 2027), or alerted us at the beginning of the summer — before most of us arrived here in Monterey — with the same option to withdraw from the Institute.

Middlebury's behavior has been opportunistic and deceitful, and I am extremely disappointed by my first impressions. As a member of the Middlebury community, I certainly understand that the Institute is not a sustainable satellite for the college to maintain, and I understand the ultimate decision to close the Institute. But, as a member of the Middlebury community, I would have expected to have been granted the courtesy of foresight in this life-altering news.

The Center for the Blue Economy at MIIS.

MEGAN SZOSTAK / COURTESY PHOTO

How the college should proceed after closing MIIS

Editorial

The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.

The Middlebury Campus

Susanna Schatz

The college decided to close its graduate campus, the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey (MIIS), leaving us surprised at the speed of this decision and cautiously optimistic about what it will mean for Middlebury's future. After facing large budget cuts and changes to workplace benefits, students and staff at Middlebury have recently campaigned for the closure of the Institute, building on an idea that has been on the minds of some faculty members for several years due to MIIS' financial strain. Last spring's walkout, various op-eds from faculty and students in The Campus, and our own Editorial Board's call for the closure of MIIS crystallized the desire for change. We commend President Baucom's quick decision to heed the voices of our most forthright faculty, staff, and students. It is one that will shape his legacy and our perception of him as a decisive leader. But we will not waste a moment before asking what this will this mean for the college going forward besides a partially salvaged budget and an unsettled definition of what our school really is.

While we see the dissolution of MIIS as an important step forward to address the budget deficit, we hope that the President will be explicit and forthcoming when deciding where to take us next. The drain of Middlebury's finances to MIIS has long acted as an institutional scapegoat for the leadership in Old Chapel. Without this financial black hole, the administration has the opportunity to redirect funding back towards Vermont based-resources. We believe reversing the budget cuts, particularly the compensation cuts for our hard-working faculty and staff should be the first step — not another new building or dining hall scanning system. However these changes may look, we expect President Baucom to be transparent about the timeline surrounding Middlebury's new windfall. Will today's first year students see concrete changes — smaller class sizes, more satisfied faculty, and fully staffed dining halls — by the end of their time here, or will it take several cycles of students to feel the benefits of this capital? These decisions and the extent to which we are informed on them will be essential to establishing trust between Baucom's administration and our community.

Letting go of MIIS also raises the question of where Middlebury's identity stands. We hold a fine line between a small liberal arts college and a globally focused institution. For years, the college has branded us as "The Big M." The soon-to-be-outdated homepage on Middlebury's website still touts "Vermont", "Monterey, California" and "The World" as three equally relevant aspects of the college. While our Vermont campus should always take priority, we don't believe the closure of MIIS should influence the growth or lack thereof of Middlebury Language Schools and Schools Abroad. These are opportunities associated with our school that many of us are proud of, and we want to see those programs expanded in a thoughtful, collaborative and effective way. To us, this conflict has highlighted what makes Middlebury's branding stand out — that is, the balance between providing a global education while still being "the town's college." Where the MIIS budget goes will define where Middlebury is headed and what kind of college it ultimately wants to be in the coming years.

The board acknowledges MIIS students who face uncertainty around their education. We hope Middlebury will preserve valuable skills from MIIS in several internationally focused disciplines — skills that are still relevant and needed — and transfer those skills and see them spread to our campus in Vermont, whether that be through the introduction of new interdisciplinary courses, or through hiring new professors on our campus. We expect President Baucom to see this as a critical opportunity to enrich Middlebury's academic environment.

In the past, Middlebury students have often felt defeated when clashing ideologically with the administration. In spite of this, the quick turn around from the spring semester to this recent announcement shows that this administration is willing to listen and act on the concerns of the people who feel these changes the most. President Baucom has been seen chatting up new students and parents on move-in day, and has made a new Instagram account as the Middlebury College President. We hope that this is not only performative, and that he continues to make an effort to listen to the voices of students, faculty, and staff. Authentic communication must remain a long-term commitment of his administration, not just a temporary performance while confronted with this issue. This next chapter will define Baucom's legacy here at Middlebury, and we hope that it is characterized by its honesty.

Updates to violence prevention and healthy relationships promotion efforts in Health & Wellness

Op-Ed

***Madeline Hope-Lyng** is the director of Health and Wellness Education at Middlebury.*

Beginning this fall, Health & Wellness Education is making updates to our community's violence prevention strategy to strengthen our proactive power. This coming year, the MiddSafe hotline is ending, and a new group named PEAR (Peers Educating for Affirming Relationships, which combines the resources of both MiddSafe and the Mental Health Peer Educators, will take its place. This change allows our community to bolster our efforts in the prevention of interpersonal violence through increasing professional staff focus on Green Dot Bystander Intervention and the promotion of healthy relationships more actively and effectively in partnership with student peer health educators.

Ending the MiddSafe hotline and shifting the Mental Health Peer Educator program comes with both sadness for the end of two beloved peer advocacy and education groups and hope for what this makes way for in the future. This change is happening because over the past several semesters hotline calls have decreased by over 90% and participation in key Mental Health Peer Educator programming have decreased by 80%, according to internal record keeping in Health & Wellness Education. This reality makes it challenging for advocates and peer health educators to practice their skills and indicates that we need to redirect our focus to the promotion of healthy relationships and the prevention of relationship violence.

White we can't know exactly why participation and calls have decreased, one consideration is the increase in professional support services at Middlebury. Since 2014 (the year the MiddSafe hotline began), Middlebury has greatly increased professional resources for campus-based medical services (300% increase in nurse practitioners and 200% increase in certified Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners), mental health support (230% increase in licensed mental health counselors) and violence prevention efforts on campus. Middlebury also introduced professional Residence Director staff who respond to and support students in crisis. Additionally, significant strides have been made with respect to communication between and resource sharing across Civil Rights and Title IX, Public Safety, on-call staff rotations, the Center for Health and Wellness offices and more. Lastly, in 2020, Middlebury implemented 24/7/365 access to counseling and medical services for undergraduate students in addition to brick-and-mortar services. Student use of these resources continues to increase based on usage data across these offices.

It is important to note that resources for supporting students and friends of students who have experienced power-based personal violence and mental health challenges, among other issues, continue to be available on campus and in our community. They include these four resources.

Counseling Services - counseling@middlebury.edu, 802-443-5141. Individual counseling, group counseling and workshops available to support students or friends of students with a broad range of challenges including interpersonal conflict and power based personal violence among other topics.

Health Services - healthservices@middlebury.edu, 802-443-3290. Medical appointments to support students who have experienced impacts of power based personal violence, STI testing, pregnancy testing, referrals to local providers for specialized care, Sexual Assault Nurse Examinations and other health needs.

TimelyCare - go/TimelyCare. Medical and counseling appointments available 24/7/365 for students experiencing challenges related to power based personal violence among other topics. Atria Collective (Addison County advocacy hotline) 1-800-388-4205. Community agency providing advocacy services over the phone and by appointment. If needed appointments can be arranged to be hosted on campus or other places in the community.

Notes From the Desk: Pressing on

Op-Ed

***Madeleine Kaptein** is a member of the class of 2025.5 and the Editor in Chief. **Mandy Berghela** is a member of the class of 2026 and the Managing Editor.*

Welcome to the pages of The Campus. Whether you've opened our paper to read about the closure of MIIS, the college's role in a recent lawsuit or that new mural you may have noticed on Main Street, we're glad you've found us. Of the 37 student editors who have made our first issue possible, 19 wrote this issue's 20 articles and 10 arrived on campus early to kickstart their work before thinking about classes. They visited dorms to interview wide-eyed first years, attended a cross country race where the prize was maple syrup and visited the new Asian grocery store next to Bevco to inform their work.

In our archives, we found an article from a Jan. 30, 1975 issue headlined "The computer cometh" that begins: "By next fall, the basement of Voter Hall will house Middlebury College's own computer." Although a lot has changed since then, one constant is that Middlebury students seize the opportunity each year to lead and shape this paper's coverage. What our contributors write is not only relevant to our current readers but will serve as a record of the college's history.

As The Campus' new Executive Team, we are honored to be temporary stewards of a paper that has existed for 120 years.

Over the past year, The Campus has tracked how the 2024 U.S. Presidential election reverberated through Middlebury. In our special election issue, we covered the tensions unfolding on campus leading up to Donald Trump's return to the White House and have since published numerous articles about his administration's impact on the Middlebury community, from precarious visa policies for international students to severe funding cuts to research.

As these national changes ensued, Middlebury also turned a new page in leadership. We conducted one last interview with Laurie Patton and our first with Ian Baucom, our new president. We covered construction projects on campus, changes to academic requirements and the honor code, the controversies around recent graduation speakers, and investigated pricing at Crossroads Café.

In the Spring, we wrote about the list of budget cuts the administration announced to the community via email that spurred protests and debate over the college's values. By reporting news stories, publishing opinion pieces and editorializing, we chronicled the controversy that followed. Just two weeks ago, we broke the story online that Middlebury will close its graduate school in Monterey.

Through the chaos of the news cycle, we did not let culture fall behind. We covered our student-run arts festival Nocturne, numerous exhibitions and performances on campus, and spotlighted our sports teams through their wins and losses. Diving into life off campus, we toured the AquaViTea Kombucha factory, gauged student's feelings about Vermont politician Bernie Sanders, and previewed Middlebury's first rave at the Town Hall Theater.

This is the kind of work we hope to continue this year. But we can't do it alone. Regardless of who you are, if you see something you think we should be covering — whether it's a problem on campus we haven't written about, a question you've always had about Middlebury that we can help answer, or a local business that deserves our attention — tell us. Email campus@middlebury.edu or submit an anonymous news tip through our website.

We also want more students to contribute to The Campus. Anyone, even first years, can write for any section, take photos, or draw visuals for us; all of our writing happens freelance-style, so there is no application process or long-term commitment to taking an assignment or submitting.

You won't regret asking for your first story. We know from experience.

The Middlebury Campus

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More information about the paper and its submission policies can be found online at www.middleburycampus.com.

The opinions expressed by contributors to the Opinions section, as well as reviews, columns, editorial comics and other commentary, are views of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the newspaper. The Campus welcomes letters to the editor at 250 words or less, or opinions submissions at 800 words or less.

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The Middlebury Campus

REEL CRITIC: MIDDLEBURY NEW FILMMAKERS FESTIVAL

By ANTHONY CINQUINA
Arts & Culture Editor

STAFF PICKS
M

New and first-time filmmakers from around the world came to Middlebury to showcase their work at the 11th annual Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival, which took place Aug. 20–Aug. 24.

Middlebury students received free admission to the entire festival, so I made sure to see as many screenings as I could. The atmosphere was great around town; filmmakers from around the world and big-time city slickers in jackets and dress pants meandered around Main Street. The cafes were bustling and the art galleries were full.

Here are a few short ramblings (and scores) for some of my favorite films from the weekend.

Land with No Rider

Tamar Lando's "Land with No Rider" blew me away. Lando is a Philosophy professor at Columbia University and a photographer by hobby, and it shows. Her eye for visual beauty and her ear for psychological depth is impressive and sensitive. Seeing as Lando doesn't speak a word for the entire film, it really is her eyes and ears that are doing the heavy lifting.

"Land with No Rider" follows an eclectic cast of veteran cowboys and ranchers in Southwestern New Mexico. They are the last generation of a rapidly vanishing way of life. They work hard and work alone; their connection to the land is powerful.

One might expect, as I did, men of this sort to be taciturn, but here it is quite the opposite. Whether that comes down to the genius of Lando's direction and conversational skills or the cowboys themselves being eager to share their long bottled thoughts, it makes for a deeply profound narrative. Birth, death, isolation, time, change, and industry, the arid deserts of New Mexico make for a bleak backdrop to some incredibly haunting soliloquies.

Visually the film is stunning. Lando is comfortable lingering on emptiness and in silence. You are allowed, encouraged even, to enter this desolate world, to feel lonely and to feel the land and the culture slowly decaying away.

Overall Rating: 9/10

Friendship

Andrew DeYoung's directorial debut "Friendship" features some heavy hitters: Tim Robinson, Paul Rudd and Kate Mara. The film maintains a delicate balance of comedy and gloom. Tim Robinson's Craig Weatherman is socially inept, creepy and pathetic, yet somehow the unfiltered authenticity of his derangement is a little endearing (Tim Robinson does well to make such a contradiction work on screen). Paul Rudd gives a similarly impressive and contradictory performance. His character, an impossibly charismatic weatherman, slowly reveals himself to be unfulfilled and empty as cracks in his facade creep to the surface.

The film is memorable for its unique performances and great script (the actors seem to bounce off each other in equal parts razor sharp script writing and free flowing improvisation). There does seem to be something genuinely insightful and interesting with what DeYoung has to say about the shortcomings of toxic male expectations in the 21st century, but the ideas never fully form.

Overall Rating: 7/10

How Deep is your Love

Eleanor Mortimer's "How Deep is Your Love" follows a crew of marine biologists on a deep-sea exploration mission. The style film is clinical, mimicking the type of cataloging work done by the scientists on board. The film alternates between the human moments aboard the boat and the deep-sea submersible as it sinks to the ocean floor.

The above-water scenes are fact and exposition heavy. We learn, from both the narrator and from the scientists on board, about the work being done onboard and why it's important. We also learn about the billion dollar industry of deep-sea mining, and the incredibly desirable "nodules" that reside in droves on the seabed.

These moments are fine, if not a little flat, compared to the sometimes overwhelmingly unfiltered beauty and mystery of the deep sea. The extended undersea sequences are gorgeous. Mortimer knows this and lets us float down there for a while as dozens of unknown and uncataloged organisms drift in and out of view. The slow, single-shot descent from topwater to seabed is a particularly moving sequence. It's enchanting to watch the light dim and the sea life slowly morph into more bizarre forms.

Overall Rating: 7/10 (9/10 for the deep sea sequences)

Mulholland Drive

On a few occasions, the festival departed from its typical "New Filmmaker" format to screen some classics. Among these more established films were Robert Altman's "The Player," Jim Jarmusch's "Dead Man" and David Lynch's "Mullholland Drive."

Enough has been said about "Mulholland Drive", so I'll try to keep it brief.

Lynch's films detest interpretation; like the more you explain a joke, or a dream, the more magic is lost. About midway through the film, at the late-night, avant garde Club Silencio, the illusionist onstage reveals the mystery, and shows us Lynch's hand. How do we interpret reality compared to art, compared to dreams, compared to nightmares? What are the levels of reality? How do sound and vision synergize in art to evoke such intense emotion in us? What role does film play in all this?

Anyone who watches this film feels some sort of unique magic in that scene, as Rebekah Del Rio performs a gorgeous rendition of Roy Orbison's "Crying." Stuffed between scenes better suited to mystery, comedy, or thriller flicks, Club Silencio stands out as a brief glimpse behind the curtain, an explanation for all the oddities and idiosyncrasies of the reality that Lynch had up until then presented to us.

Overall Rating: 9/10

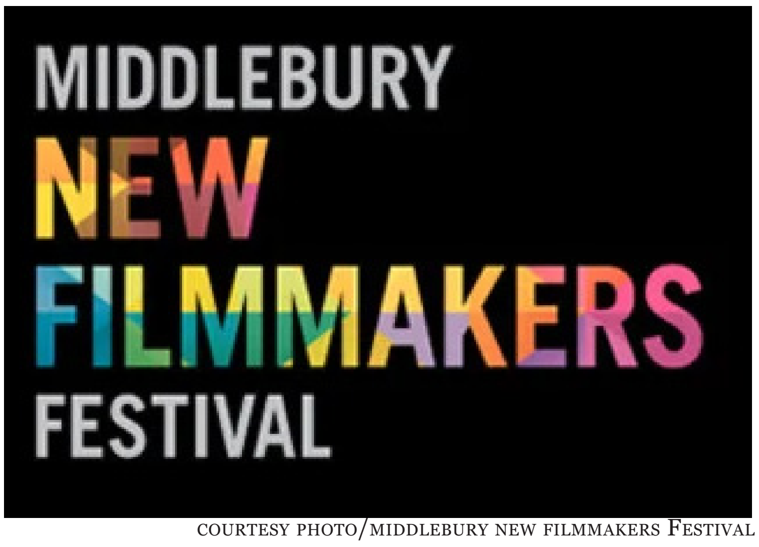
Hundreds of Beavers

You likely won't ever see another movie quite like this one. And that's not just because it's that good (though it is), but because of the sheer creativity and endless supply of imagination involved in putting together a project like this.

"Hundreds of Beavers" is a faux-silent, black and white, slap-stick, action, dark comedy, period piece, looney-toones inspired, videogame-esque independent feature film. The film follows a once gloriously successful applejack salesman as he finds himself awake for winter in the tundral northwest. The film's narrative is gamified. The protagonist must collect more and more beaver, wolf, and rabbit pelts in order to marry the merchant's pole-dancing daughter, all while an army of beavers build an industrial superstructure in the background. The animal pelts act as collectibles, driving the plot forward, and pushing the protagonist to build continuously elaborate and brutal traps.

The film is fun, it's creative and it makes two hours feel like 30 minutes.

Overall Rating: 8/10



COURTESY PHOTO/MIDDLEBURY NEW FILMMAKERS FESTIVAL
Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival Poster.

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SUMMERTIME SOUL FOODS: A BOOK REVIEW

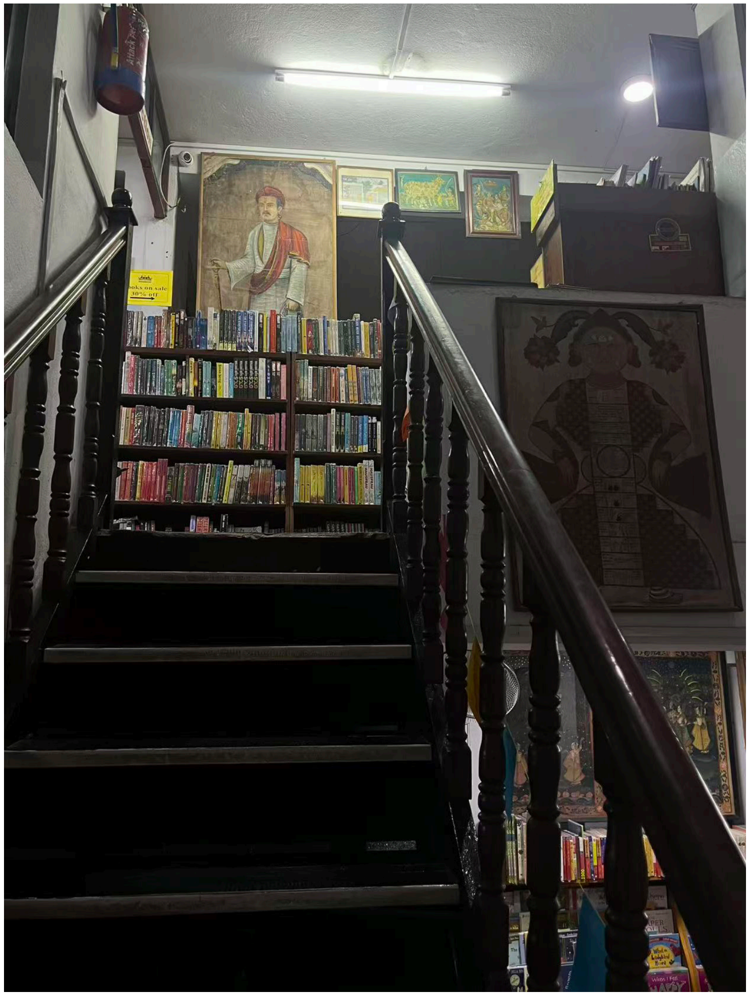
By CHRISTY LIANG
Arts & Culture Editor

Reading for pleasure can feel like an elusive luxury amid the perpetual, cyclical motion of college. Over the summer, however, time regains its elasticity, yielding a sweet languor I've already begun to miss.

I looked forward to my summer reading because it would be an entirely personal selection where I'd prioritize the aesthetics of words, the immediate relatability of contemporary fiction and the inimitable depth of female interiority as the thematic focus. I did not have a pre-curated reading list. Rather, I stumbled upon books to read by chance, affinity, and more often than not, on whims.

The book that stayed with me the most was Catherine Lacy's latest, "The Möbius Book". As a newly declared English and Religion double major, the book hit close to home. It's divided into two mirroring halves. One is a memoir, the other fiction. Despite differences of form, the central concerns and basic plot lines remain the same — a woman writer grapples with a tragic breakup as her conversations and thoughts unravel regarding human relation, writing as healing, love and sex, and most importantly, finding and losing faith.

Other than its formal inventiveness, what truly resonated with me was the book's attitude of reverence towards what is ultimately unknowable about the human experience. There is a special relief when an author, after intense bouts of intellectualizing, suddenly pulls back and acknowledges the plain unsolvable mystery of it all — "what the body is, what death is, what emotions are, how anything really works at all."


THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS/CHRISTY LIANG

In an interview, Lacy expresses that she has long wanted to write a book about faith; the destined loss of it and the seeming impossibility of ever regaining it. One of the most poignant moments in the book is the conversation Edie (the female protagonist in the fictional half) claims to have had with a dying dog during her semester abroad in Greece. Whether real or symbolic, this exchange between a confused human and a dog on his last breath challenges our conventional understanding of life on earth by alluding to reincarnation, the divine and the unity between different life forms. Strikingly, the dog says at one point: "Men were created in order to destroy everything, and women were created so there would be one thing they couldn't destroy."

In July, I took a trip to Nepal. After catching a passing glimpse of Nepal Book Depot in a taxi, I knew immediately I had to return for a thorough book hunt. Resembling a dimly lit, narrow alleyway, the bookstore features an astoundingly wide selection across space and time. Soon after stepping in, I had found four books to take home with me.

"August Blue" is a work of fiction by Deborah Levy. I had started reading this book on the trip, so it now bears the nostalgic imprint of Kathmandu's stultifying heat, exquisite temples, and meandering streets bursting with chaos.

In a dreamlike land where rules of conventional behavior are suspended, unbelievable characters are presented with such assured forwardness that they start to radiate resonance. Elsa, a renowned pianist, walks off the stage mid-performance and sets off on a wandering journey across Europe, convinced that a strange woman, her conceived double, follows her around to different countries. Liberated from the present-tense trance of performance, Elsa finally delves into the buried history of her self-formation in a complex web of familial relationships, kin and adopted, like seeing mist slowly disperse on a dewy morning.

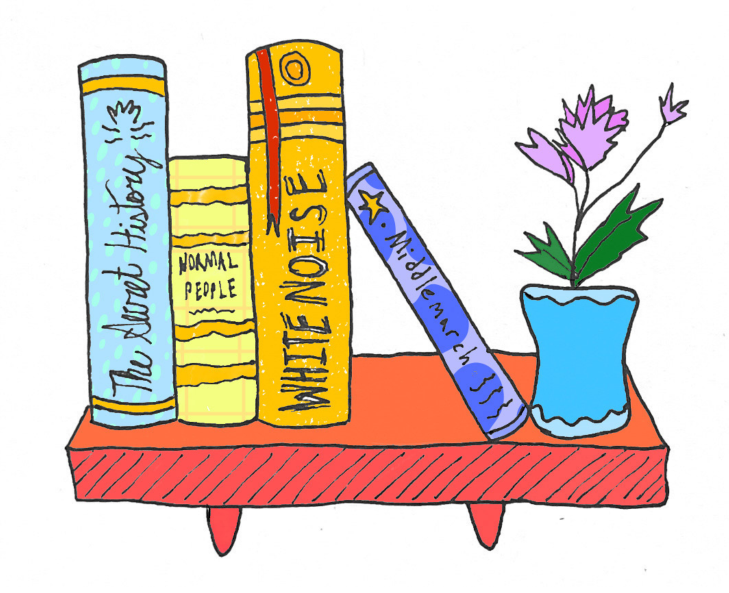
Reading the book was like being enveloped in an amorphous mood. Levy is a writer extremely measured in doling out details and explanations, keeping everything she writes thinly veiled and resolutions just beyond reach.

Next up is "Arlington Park" by Rachel Cusk, a writer I've become quite enamoured with recently. Similar to her famous trilogy "Outline Series", "Arlington Park" features Cusk's signature razor-sharp analysis of human interiority. Reading Outline (the first in the trilogy) in my "Truth and Other Fictions" class this past Spring, I felt reservations towards Cusk's overly neat imposition of order and narrative integrity onto the messy and ultimately untraceable human life.

In "Arlington Park", however, there is a noticeable softening of tone as Cusk delves into the unfurling consciousness of domestic women, each of them running a household in a London-adjacent, bourgeois neighborhood called Arlington Park. What surprised me about the book was how much it reminded me of Virginia Woolf's "To the Lighthouse." There is a similar tendency to metaphorize female interiority through botanical images, to illuminate the richness of femininity and the uncommunicable divide between husband and wife, and to expose the fierce clash between the creative life and the domestic life in adult womanhood. Seeing as "To the Lighthouse" is my favorite read of all time, I had a blast reading "Arlington Park".

Beyond these three books, I read several others over the summer. "Sleepless Nights" by Elizabeth Hardwick was poetic and illuminating; "Bunny" by Mona Awad was a little overhyped, in my opinion; "The Avocado Dud" was a chaotic, but ultimately aesthetic whirlwind of mishaps and growth; and "The Physics of Sorrow" by Georgi Gospodinov was inventive, funny and terribly touching.

As my sophomore fall begins, I hope to read more for pleasure, reverie and to stay connected with all the ineffable dimensions.



THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS/SKILES ROBERTS SALVADOR

QUADECA FINDS HIS SEA LEGS ON "VANISHER, HORIZON SCRAPER"

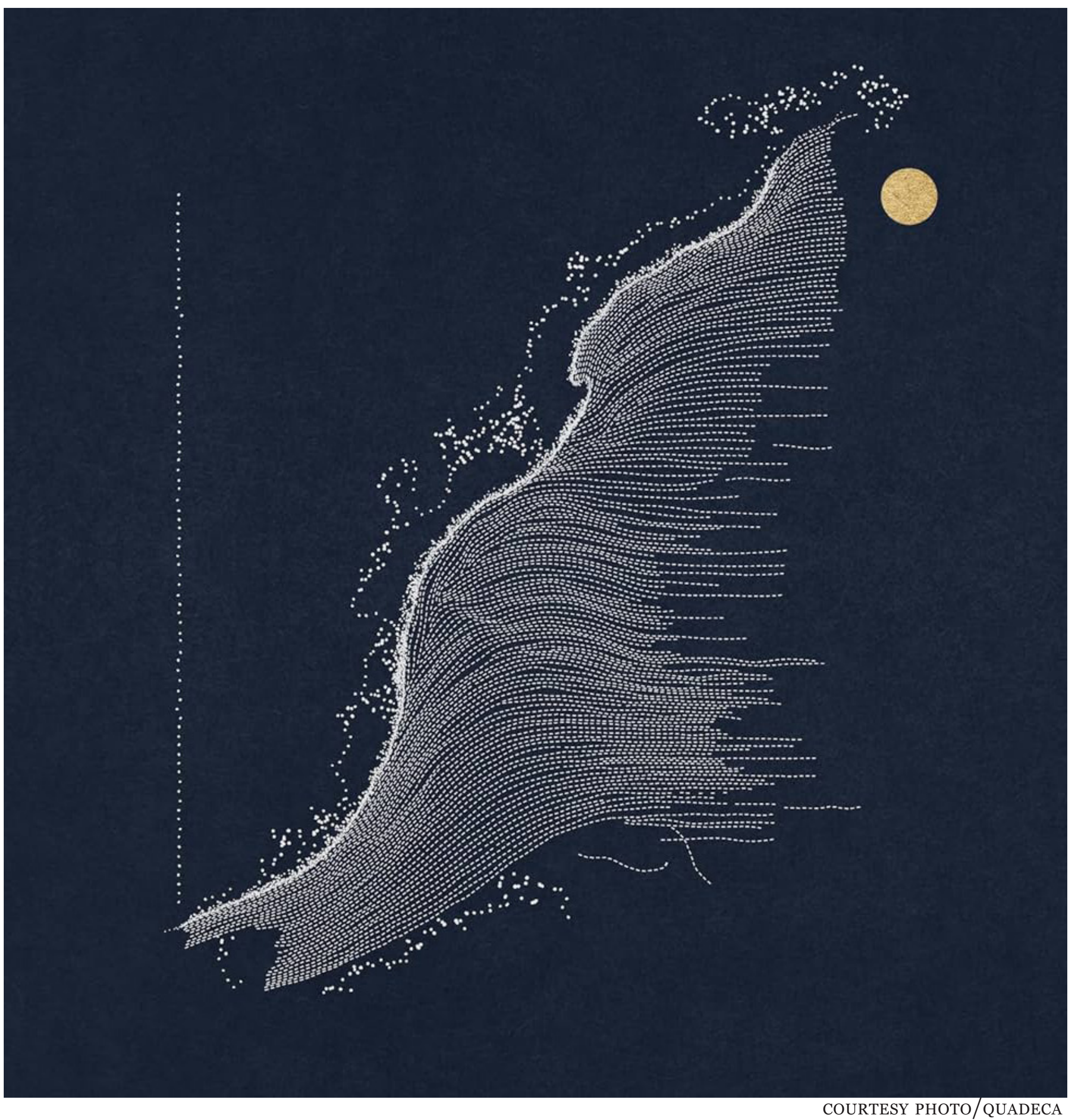
By GUS MORRILL
Arts & Culture Editor

When the strongly nautical "Vanisher, Horizon Scraper" by Quadeca released this summer, I was as landlocked as one could be. It was a few minutes past midnight, and I had just returned from a movie night at a friend's apartment to my parking spot on the fourth floor of GSU's parking garage. In six hours, my alarm would go off, and I would have to get ready for work. Sleep was long overdue. However, on my phone's glowing screen, the notification for the release of Quadeca's newest album had just arisen. I weighed my options for a moment, and then sat back in my Honda's drab interior and queued the first song.

The anticipation for Benjamin Lasky's fourth studio album had accumulated for a year and a half. "Vanisher" had first been announced in February of 2024, followed by radio silence for the next year and speculation that the album would never be finished. On the fourth floor of Georgia State's parking garage,however, the project became real. I had made the right decision.

"NO QUESTIONS ASKED" kicks off the album with six minutes of tinny guitar plucks, piano, and layered vocals, setting the atmosphere of the album. Building arpeggios that crash like a wave into scattered drums and cymbals illuminate "WAGING WAR". The next track, "RUIN MY LIFE", is emblematic of the artist's own career, with lines arguing for the acceptance of imperfection in service of authenticity.

The Bay Area native began his time in the public eye with videos reacting to the soccer video game FIFA, before turning his attention to music. Quadeca's first two albums centered around lyrical rap, and while exhibiting early signs of his producer chops, were not my favorite. However, the artist's 2022 project, "I Didn't Mean to Haunt You", showed a complete evolution in quality. Lasky was crafting a cohesive narrative around ghosts and grief, developing eerie art and glitch pop instrumentals, and gaining the cosign of rapper Danny Brown. He had taken a creative risk, and it had produced something singular.


COURTESY PHOTO/QUADECA

Quadeca's album cover for Vanisher, Horizon Scraper.

Quadeca followed this release with a mixtape of songs that didn't make the cut in 2024 under the name "Scrapyard". This was Quadeca's most positively received release yet, garnering a #10 spot in Album of the Year's 2024 user score ranking. "Scrapyard" featured more sincere songwriting than had been seen from the artist previously, delivered with soft vocals surrounded by harsh and weird electronic production. Quadeca's collaboration with Kevin Abstract on the tail end of the album was a high point of the mixtape, and indicative of greater things to come, such as their collaboration on this past June's "Blush".

The three singles that Lasky dropped in anticipation of this most recent project are some of the album's best. "MONDAY" is an upbeat track with plucked cello and cascading piano, and "FOREGONE" is reminiscent of a church hymnal, except that its devotion is levied at an individual rather than the divine. On the topic of the divine, "GODSTAINED" was the first track to be released, with Bossa Nova styled flute and drums creating a supremely summery environment for ponderings on fate and free will.

Each song on the project is its own distinct world, and Quadeca straddles several genres, with a very specific creative vision that succeeds in most of its intentions. "THUNDRRR" is a feverish push for air amidst tumultuous sea, accented with discordant mandolin notes and synths. Meanwhile, the Homeric track "THE GREAT BAKUNAWA" features Danny Brown rapping from the perspective of a mythical sea monster.

That being said, there are times when this creative vision does not meet its mark in my eyes. "THAT'S WHY" sees the artist go introspective into darker themes before resolving that "It don't get any better than this". This song felt more reminiscent of the forced edge that Quadeca had tried to adopt on his early projects, and took me out slightly of the otherwise epic and sweeping tracklist. By the same token, "I DREAM ABOUT SINKING" was an ambient instrumental that, while developing the tone of the album, dragged on too long for me.

These are minor complaints. As a whole, the album marks an astronomical shift for the 24-year-old. In fact, part of his appeal is how clear this shift has been. Quadeca's 2019 "Voice Memos" and the mixtapes that preceded it were very similar to the work of other artists at the time and felt very much like they had been made by a 17 year old. Yet, like a little cousin that you don't see for a few years and then is suddenly working at a hedge fund, Quadeca's musical prowess has become professional out of nowhere. These most recent projects are fleshed out thematically, lush, and truly pieces of media that could not have come from anyone else. I, for one, cannot wait to see what is next.

A & C-ING IT: A GLIMPSE INTO THE 106TH MIDDLEBURY PERFORMING ARTS SERIES’ SEASON

By ELLIE TRINKLE
Senior Arts & Culture Editor

COURTESY PHOTO/MIDDLEBURY PERFORMING ARTS SERIES
The Middlebury Performing Arts Series returns for its 106th year.

The Middlebury Performing Arts Series (PAS) is returning to campus for its 106th season to highlight performance art forms of all kinds — music, theatre and more will grace the eyes and ears of the Mahaney Arts Center (MAC) this fall. Whether you’re looking to unwind from the beginning of school chaos, or simply seeking a fun performance to watch, this year’s lineup has something for everyone.

Beginning the season for the second year in a row is the all-women classical ensemble Sophie Shao & Friends on Sept. 12. The ensemble features cellist Shao, violinist Carmlit Zori and pianist Ieva Jokubaviciute, who will perform various classical sonatas. They will also perform selections from François Couperin’s Five Concert Pieces to celebrate the new Middlebury College Museum of Art exhibit “Le Petit Salon: The Journey of an Eighteenth-Century Room from Paris to Vermont.”

Following that will be “The Other Mozart”, Sylvia Milo’s award winning play, on Sept. 26 in Wright Theatre. The play centers around Nannerl Mozart, Amadeus’ sister, who was gifted at piano and frequently performed alongside her brother, a story often left untold. Special Collections will host a pre-show open house that will contextualize the 18th century atmosphere the play takes place in, as well as share archives of other women whose stories have also been lost to history.

On Oct. 25, Nordic acoustic band The Dreamer’s Circus will blend traditional styles of folk with improvisational jazz and contemporary pop. The trio includes Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen, Ale Carr and Nikolaj Busk, who first met at a folk festival in Copenhagen in 2009, quickly bonding over their love of classical music that incorporates modern elements. Their latest album is entitled “Handed On” and encapsulates their unique reimagination of the traditional Nordic folk style.

Then comes the electronic sounds of “Fiction”, an immersive sonic journey that is the brainchild of flutist Allison Loggins-Hull and the two time Grammy-winning vocal ensemble Roomful of Teeth. The title of the performance encapsulates it perfectly; it is a story of push and pull, all told through intricate melodies and unique composition. Witness this deeply interesting, genre-bending work on Nov. 5 in the Olin C. Robison Concert Hall.

The week after, long time PAS performer Takács Quartet will return to celebrate their 50th anniversary season and their 31st performance at Middlebury since 1994. The Hungarian string quartet has won a Grammy and three Gramophone awards. They will perform the Vermont premiere of Clarice Assad’s NEXUS, a piece that was commissioned especially for them and is co-commissioned by the PAS. Professor Emeritus of Music Larry Hamberlin will deliver a free pre-concert lecture.

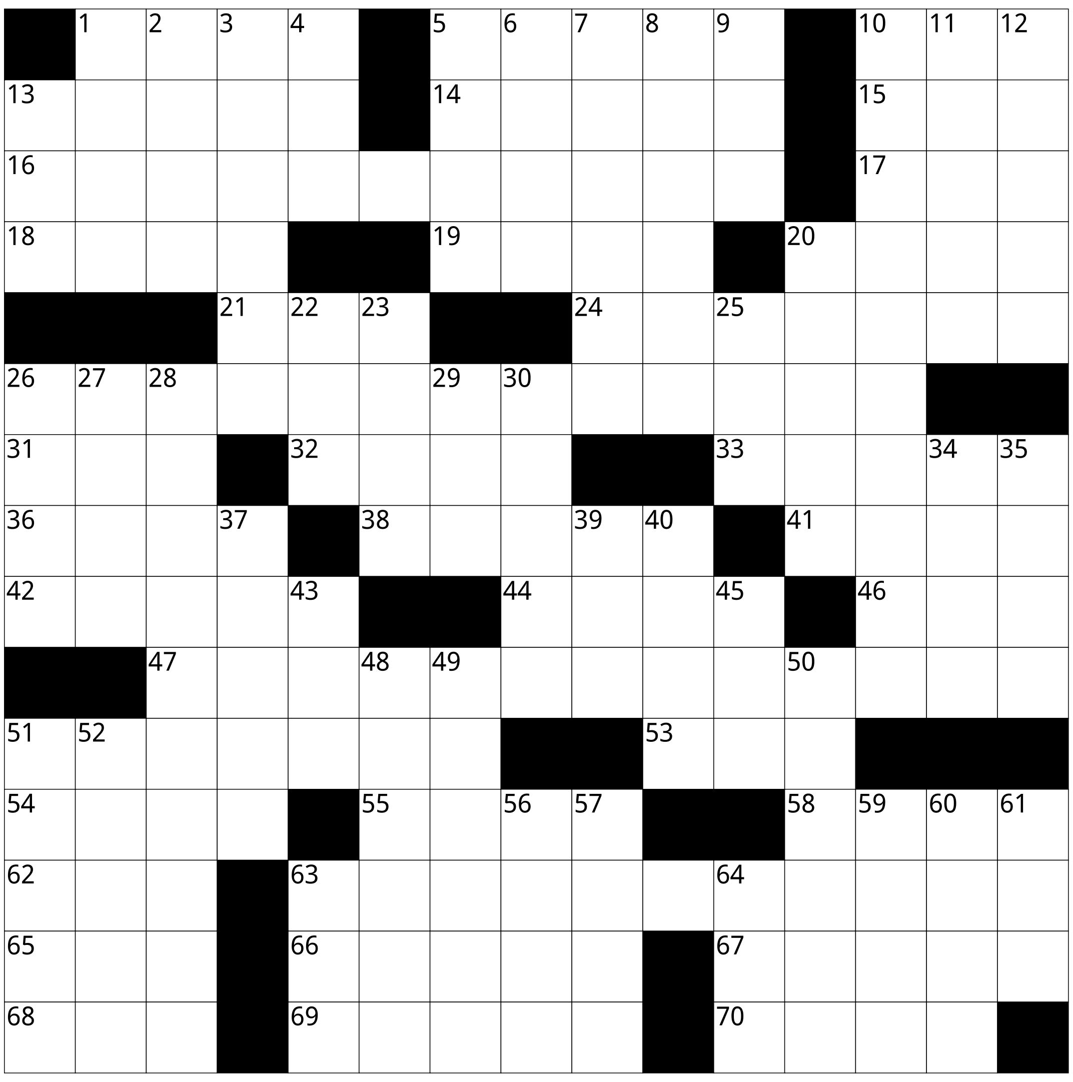
To ring in the holiday cheer, jazz pianist Isaiah J. Thompson will make his Middlebury debut with “A Guaraldi Holiday.” Performing the legendary pieces by composer and pianist Vince Guaraldi, whose work accompanied many “Peanuts” cartoons, Thompson will reimagine these classic holiday pieces. Earning the title of a Steinway artist and winning the 2023 American Pianists Association Award and the Cole Porter Fellow in Jazz makes Thompson’s series debut nothing short of exciting.

J-Term will bring Vermont duo pianist Nahre Sol, who has gained recognition on YouTube with a whopping 75 million+ views, and internationally recognized bassist Ben Finley on Jan. 16. The two use their diverse knowledge of music to create a unique sound; combining chamber, ambient and improvisation styles.

The PAS is bringing new talent, returning artists and above all, excitement to its 106th season. Attending these events can be a fun social opportunity with friends, a solo adventure to destress from schoolwork, or anything in between. No matter what, the PAS has got you covered. And if the curtain closes and you’re feeling inspired to write, we’re totally here for it.

Clearly Confused

Avery Goldstein



ACROSS

1 Length times width
5 Shakespearean wedding vow
10 Sen. Peter Welsh, e.g.
13 "The Road Not Taken" poet
14 Class of 2026 or 2026.5 in 2024, say
15 "Abbot Elementary" principal
16 Chocolate chip specification
17 Sue Bird's number in the WNBA
18 Creative spark
19 Hathaway of "The Devil Wears Prada"
20 "Inside Out" elephant ___ Bong
21 IMO alternative
24 "We don't talk about Bruno" movie
26 Video of a concert, for instance
31 Small battery size
32 "It's not ___, it's a when"
33 Peak performance
36 Cereal companion
38 Hogwarts potions professor
41 Trade jabs
42 Energize, as a crowd
44 Start from scratch
46 Golden ratio symbol
47 IBM coding language
51 "Casablanca" setting
53 Chihuahua's bark
54 Tax pros
55 Baltimore seafood speciality
58 Flightless birds
62 Outdoor gear co-op
63 Contradictory crustacean
65 Tax org.
66 "Let me repeat ..."
67 ___-Loompa
68 Steamed bun
69 Karate or recorder acquisitions
70 World Cup cheers

DOWN

1 Dry
2 Repetitive learning method
3 Dead giveaway?
4 Gobbled up
5 President in "Barbie," Rae
6 Direction of this clue
7 Gracie Abrams for Taylor Swift's Eras Tour
8 Closing words
9 FDR's successor
10 Tinder or Hinge
11 Track meet component
12 Lassi fruit
13 Agent Petty's org. in "Ozark"
20 Edna Mode hairstyle
22 Bikini top
23 Egg layers
25 "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" org.
26 Dalai ___
27 "___ to please"
28 Chilean city with a Middlebury study abroad program
29 Bengals on the scoreboard
30 Joan ____
34 When doubled, a Hawaiian fish
35 Guitarist Clapton
37 Praise
39 Epi center?
40 Whirlpool
43 Pipe material, in brief
45 ____ - Wan Kenobi
48 Blame
49 Regular
50 Spritz ingredient
51 Golden arches pork sandwich
52 "Aida," for one
56 Slightly
57 Physiques, for short
59 Play charades
60 Ballpark figures
61 Sauna site
63 Triangular sail
64 Follower of boo, woo and yoo

FALL SPORTS PREVIEWS

COURTESY PHOTO / WILL COSTELLO

Middlebury Women's Soccer celebrates a goal against Castleton.

By KANAN CLIFFORD, TING CUI, BROOKE FRIBERG, THEO MANIATIS, SIMON SCHMIEDER

Sports Editors

Women's Field Hockey

Head Coach: Katharine DeLorenzo
Athletes to Watch: Grace Keefe '26, Thea Rosenzweig '26, Georgianne Defeo '26

The Middlebury women's field hockey team enters the 2025 season after winning a league-record seventh straight NESCAC championship. Head coach Katharine DeLorenzo, who ranks third in career wins among active Division III coaches, has led the Panthers through an unprecedented stretch of dominance. Over the last seven years, the team has gone 146–7 and earned National Field Hockey Coaches Association (NFHCA) Division III Coaching Staff of the Year honors every season. However, this fall brings new challenges. Last year, the Panthers graduated their only three first team All-Americans. They will turn to their seniors, including defense stalwart Grace Keefe '26, goaltender Thea Rosenzweig '26, and NFHCA First-Team All-Region Georgianne Defeo '26. Their bid for an eighth consecutive title sets the stage for one of the fall season's central storylines.

Key Competitions: Wesleyan (Home– Oct. 12), Tufts (Home– Oct.18), Williams (Away– Oct.28)

Men's Football

Head Coach: Doug Mandigo '96
Athletes to Watch: Brian Moran '26, Connor McClellan '28, Mike Ahonen '26

In last year's preview, the Campus stressed that Middlebury's football team would need to find a leader under center in order to repeat 2024's NESCAC championship. They did, turning to now-senior Brian Moran '26. He led the team to a 6-3 finish, averaging 220 yards per game through the air and throwing for 16 touchdowns. The Panthers also look to balance out their offense with standout running back Connor McClellan '28. McClellan ranked third in the NESCAC in rushing scores with seven last season, and will be counted on to continue racking up yards for the Panthers to successfully execute a two-pronged offense.

Key Competitions: Wesleyan University (Away– Sep. 13), Bowdoin College (Home– Sep. 20), Tufts University (Home– Nov. 8)

Women's Volleyball

Head Coach: Sarah Raunecker
Athletes to Watch: Molly Harrison '26, Campbell Keller '25, Ava Tuccio '26

Twenty fourth-ranked Middlebury Women's Volleyball returns to the court after last year's upset over top-seeded Colby, claiming the program's sixth NESCAC title. The team reached the NCAA regional finals for the first time in 14 years as well. While the Panthers graduated star setter Gabbie O'Toole '25, six of the seven starters return. Freshman Molly Macdonald '29 steps into the seventh spot, joining a formidable cast that includes NESCAC Player of the Year Molly Harrison '27, and standout seniors Campbell Keller '26 and Ava Tuccio '26. Head coach Sarah Raunecker is at the helm for her 31st season, touting a career 518-279 record. She's joined on staff by assistant coach Brian Dunlop and student coach Spencer Ralph '28.5. Rauckener is eager to see the group come together, but they cannot take long: the Panthers open a slew of NESCAC matchups on Sept. 19, beginning with Connecticut College.

Key Competitions: Williams (Away– Sep. 27), Colby College (Home– Oct.11), Wesleyan (Away– Oct.18)

Men's Tennis

Head Coach: Andrew Thomson '10
Athletes to Watch: Julian Wu '26, Noah Lewis '27, Hugh Hentschel '26

The Middlebury men's tennis team enters the season determined to build on last year's NESCAC championship win and a bittersweet NCAA tournament run that ended in the Round of 16 with a loss to Johns Hopkins. The Panthers welcomed four first years to help fill the void left by graduated stars Noah Laber '25 and Neel Epstein '25. While the roster faces some temporary changes with players Thehan Wijemanne '27 and Nikky Kondamuri '27 studying abroad, the team remains optimistic about the squad's depth and potential. The fall season serves primarily as preparation for the spring campaign, with individual development taking precedence over team results. The Panthers' immediate focus is qualifying as many players as possible for the ITA Cup — the individual national championships.

Key Competitions: Middlebury Panther Challenge (Home– September 20-21), ITA Regional Championships (Home– Sep.26)

Women's Tennis

Head Coach: Olivia Leavitt
Athletes to Watch: Elsie Van Wieren '28, Ren Barton '29, Diya Pachamuthu '29

The Middlebury women's tennis team captured the program's first-ever NESCAC championship win and advanced to the NCAA regional final last season, where they fell to Johns Hopkins. Head coach Olivia Leavitt, in her second season, has added assistant coach Sam Concannon from Washington and Lee University after the departure of Aaron Diamond. After several years of changes in the coaching staff, the team has seemed to find stability and success with coach Leavitt. Despite losing four seniors — including NCAA Individual Championship runners-up Nina Farhat '25 and Sahana Raman '25 — the Panthers remain optimistic with a close-knit nine-player squad that includes two new first-years. With no returning doubles teams and a new lineup, Middlebury faces the challenge of maintaining championship expectations against rivals like Wesleyan, Bowdoin, and Tufts, while also developing team chemistry through an experimental fall season.

Key Competitions: Middlebury Panther Challenge (Home– Sep.12-14), ITA Regional Championships (Home– Sep.26)

Men's Soccer

Head Coach: Alex Elias '08
Athletes to Watch: Pablo Gonzalez '27, Colin Dugan '27, Will Sawin '27

The Middlebury men's soccer team begins their season facing significant roster turnover. The squad lost 10 seniors, including star center back Luke Madden '25 who earned NESCAC Player of the Year honors last season. However, Madden hasn't gone far, joining the staff as an assistant coach. Stepping into Madden's central defensive role is Pablo Gonzalez '27, a transfer from the University of Connecticut who brings notable experience to the backline. Other key players include midfielder Colin Dugan '27 and forward Will Sawin '27. To replace the departed seniors, the Panthers have added nine first-years and one sophomore walk-on. Head coach Alex Elias '08, beginning his seventh season leading the team and 12th overall year with the program, has set ambitious goals. The team hopes to build on last season's NCAA tournament appearance and advance beyond the semifinal round, where they fell to Amherst for the second consecutive year. This season also brings a new leadership approach, with the coaching staff selecting team leaders from each class year to ensure all players feel represented in team decision-making.

Key Competitions: Amherst (Home– Sep. 20), Connecticut College (Away– Sep.27), Tufts (Home– Oct.18)

Women's Soccer

Head Coach: Peter Kim
Athletes to Watch: Roshann Purcell '26, Gigi Day '27, Tessa Broderick '28

Middlebury women's soccer coach Peter Kim is entering his 22nd year with a markedly different roster compared to last year's. Having graduated 15 players and returning only three seniors, the team brought on 14 first-year players. Regardless, the Panthers passed an early test of chemistry in their season-opener, securing a comfortable 7-0 win over Plymouth State. One key to the team's success this season will be stable defense; Roshann Purcell '26 and Tessa Broderick '28 made significant contributions to a defense that conceded only nine goals last year, the second lowest tally in the NESCAC. In the midfield the Panthers can turn to Gigi Day '27, a proven scorer and assist-maker. Overall, the team will look to compete with a consistent lineup rather than adjusting to the competition. Standout performances from an exciting first year class, some of whom have already made a big impact on the field, will also be crucial for the team's success this fall.

Key Competitions: Amherst (Home– Sep. 20), Bates (Home– Oct. 25), Williams (Away– Oct. 28)

Men's Golf

Head Coach: Justin Kumpulanian
Athletes to Watch: Julian Galindo Macias '27, Charlie Schulman '26, Brendan O'Holleran '26

Following the departure of key seniors Bradshaw Underhill '25, Henry Harrison '25, and Brendan Maykel '25, men's golf will turn to a strong senior class, while also looking to develop the underclassmen. Though the spring proved to be tough sledding for the Panthers, Charlie Schulman '26 shone through during the Dr. Tim Brown Invitational to deliver Middlebury a 4th place finish. Schulman and Julian Galindo Macias '27, who had a gritty T14 finish in the fall Williams Invitational, must pace this team and set a strong tone for the underclassmen to avoid another middling season for the Panthers.

Key Competitions: Duke Nelson Invitational (Home– Sep. 13-14), Williams Fall Invitational (Away– Sep. 20-21), Ekwanok Sap Bucket Challenge (Home– Oct. 14)

Women's Golf

Head Coach: Tim Walko
Athletes to Watch: Morgan Lee '26, Ella Han '27, Elizabeth Whalen '28

The women's golf team returns to the course on the heels of a historic spring season after achieving a program-first NESCAC Championship title and a record sixth place finish at the NCAA Championships. At the NESCAC tournament, the team rallied from behind to win by five strokes — one of the closest margins of victory in the competition's history. Between Audrey Tir '25, Ella Han '27, and Morgan Lee '26, the team finished with three golfers within the top 10. At the national tournament the same trio impressed, each shooting four rounds in the 70s on the par 72 course. Lee received All-NESCAC First Team and Women's Golf Coaches Association (WGCA) All-Region honors, while Han earned an All-NESCAC Second Team spot. In only his second season in charge, coach Tim Walko was also named NESCAC Coach of the Year. Finally, it will be key for Whalen to build on a successful first year as the team looks to continue their strong run of form this fall, especially without Tir.

Key Competitions: George Phinney Classic (Home– Sep. 20-21), Williams Fall Invitational (Away– Sep. 27-28), Polar Bear Shootout (Away– Oct. 4-5)

Men's Cross Country

Head Coach: Nicole Wilkerson
Athletes to Watch: Benjamin Hughes '27, Shef West '26, Harry Griff '26

Having finished third at both the NESCAC Championship and NCAA Mideast Regional meets, along with making a 14th-straight NCAA Nationals appearance, the men's cross country team enters the season looking to bring a successful formula to the next level. Benjamin Hughes '27 is the leading returner for the team, having earned All-Region and All-NESCAC First Team honors last season. Captains Harry Griff '26 and Shef West '26 will provide crucial support at the front, bringing valuable experience as seasoned championship runners. Further, a new change to the NCAA's process of qualifying for the national meet allows teams to earn their bid one race earlier in the season. As a result, the Panthers will aim to be sharp earlier than usual, dialing it up by their third race of the season

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FALL SPORTS PREVIEWS

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at St. Lawrence University.

Key Competitions:
Connecticut College Invitational (Away– Oct. 18), NESCAC Championship (Away– Nov. 1), NCAA Mideast Regional Championship (Away– Nov. 15)

Women's Cross Country

Head Coach: Nicole Wilkerson
Athletes to Watch: Audrey MacLean '27, Victoria Fawcett '26, Shea Fajen '28

The women's cross country team began the season with a statement performance over the weekend, sweeping the first 14 places at their opening meet. Building on last fall's fourth place at the NESCAC Championship and fifth place at the NCAA Mideast Regional meet, the team returns five of their seven varsity runners from the NCAA race, providing experience up front. The Panthers can alsWWwo count on a few promising of the first year runners to be in the mix. MacLean '27 finished last season as an NCAA All-American and secured Middlebury's first individual NESCAC Championship title in eight years. Shea Fajen '28 will also play a crucial role at the front, returning from a strong first year season. With new NCAA qualification standards presenting new challenges this season, they will turn to the leadership of team Captain Victoria Fawcett '26 as the pressure mounts for earning a spot at the national meet.
Key Competitions:
Connecticut College Invitational (Away– Oct. 18), NESCAC Championship (Away– Nov. 1), NCAA Mideast Regional Championship (Away– Nov. 15).

MIDDLEBURY CROSS COUNTRY TEAMS WIN 2025 SILLOWAY MAPLE SYRUP CHALLENGE

By SIMON SCHMIEDER
Senior Sports Editor

"Who's starting this thing?" Bob Dunkle, the director of the race, said as he abruptly stopped his UTV near a group of Middlebury students at the course's starting line and climbed out. One of the students offered to help, and Dunkle tossed him an airhorn as he delivered quick instructions.

Moments later, the first collegiate race of the 2025 Silloway Maple Syrup Challenge was officially underway, with the Middlebury women's cross country team setting off on the 6k course alongside several regional programs.

The meet has become a staple for the Middlebury cross country programs' fall schedule, serving as an early season tune up and providing a chance for runners to rehearse the routines of racing: Riding the bus together, warming up, toeing the line, and running in the singlet. Although these routines may seem minor, they serve a crucial role as the later meets become larger and more consequential for conference and national standing. Still, the opening race of Middlebury's season also carries a unique atmosphere that bigger meets lack.

This year's meet brought universities like Fitchburg State, Western New England, Husson, SUNY Canton and Norwich to Vermont State University's Randolph campus this past Saturday. The proximity and size of these schools, coupled with the low-stakes setting, fosters a strong sense of community — something that Dunkle prioritizes in organizing the event.

COURTESY PHOTO / GEORGE MADISON

Middlebury's Palmer '29, MacLean '27 and Jensen '29 cross the finish line together

"It's a community thing. We have the high school meet here, and then we have the colleges here... it's a nice local feel," Dunkle said.

The course also adds to that character, bringing its own local quirks compared to those of other races. Athletes weave through an orchard and around the school's campus, pass an old fire station and snake through the Lake Champagne RV campground.

The Middlebury women's cross country team navigated the course with an impressive display of pack running, claiming 20 of the top 21 spots in the race and tallying a perfect team score of 15 points. Claire Palmer '29, Annelise Jensen '29 and Audrey Maclean '27 crossed the line together to take the first three positions, while Shea Fajen '28 and Sheldyn Fisher '27 closed out the scoring five.

Thirty minutes later, the Middlebury men's runners followed up with a strong showing of their own. Notably, the men's 8k course features a grueling extra hill, often a deciding factor in the race.

"The surprising thing is who can handle the hill and who can't," Dunkle said.

The men's team handled the hill with ease, and like the women's team, claimed the individual and team titles. Benjamin Hughes '27 won the race, followed by Ethan Sholk '29 in third. The Panthers then claimed fifth through eighth place, another demonstration of focused pack running.

Of course, the Silloway Maple Syrup Challenge would not be complete without the syrup itself. Per tradition, the winning teams receive one gallon of maple syrup, while the top three individuals are rewarded with pints. Tradition also calls for post-race swims in "Lake Champagne," a small pond adjacent to the course.

Heavy rains kept most runners away this year, but the Panthers could be content without a dip as they returned to campus with gallons of maple syrup and four more titles to add to Middlebury's growing tally.

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